HOURS WITH THE BIBLE;

OR,

THE SCRIPTURES IN THE LIGHT OF MODERN KNOWLEDGE.

BY

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AN ENTIRELY NEW EDITION, REVISED THROUGHOUT
AND LARGELY REWRITTEN.

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FROM MANASSEH TO ZEDEKIAH,
WITH THE CONTEMPORARY PROPHETS.

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HOURS WITH THE BIBLE.

CHAPTER I.

JUDAH IN HEZEKIAH'S DAY.

HEZEKIAH was the last king of Judah who closed his reign amidst undisturbed prosperity. Having ascended the throne while Hoshea was still king in Samaria, he had seen the northern kingdom crushed by Assyria, and its population led off by the conqueror to the banks of the Tigris and other regions of the East. Shalmaneser IV., Sargon, and Sennacherib, had in succession reigned over the great Ninevite empire, and Jerusalem had twice been threatened by its armies; once in the reign of Sargon—Sennacherib, perhaps, acting as commander-in-chief—and the second time by that prince himself, after he succeeded to the throne. The sudden destruction of his vast host, without human intervention, had filled the world with awe, and must have invested Hezekiah with a kind of sacredness as one specially protected by heaven. The embassy from Merodach Baladan, of Babylon, the heroic opponent of the Great King, had attracted all eyes to Jerusalem and kindled the fury of Assyria; but Judah survived all these dangers, and for many years before Hezekiah's death had been left undisturbed. The Philistines in the maritime plains had become independent under Ahaz, but submitted to his successor. Under the influence

of prophets like Isaiah and Micah, Hezekiah had reversed the religious policy of his father, banishing idolatry, destroying the heathen high places, restoring the temple, reorganizing its worship, and observing the ancient national religious feasts with an enthusiasm unknown since the days of Jehoshaphat, two hundred years before. The revival of the old faith of Israel, which began under the preaching of Joel more than a hundred and fifty years before Hezekiah's day, had culminated under that of the son of Amoz. Formalism had spread with the growing influence of the priests and the stress laid on ceremonial worship,[1] but this had called forth the vigorous protests of the prophets, who, while owning the authority of the Mosaic system, insisted

[1] 2 Chron. xxix. 11. Num. iii. 6, 8, 13; xviii. 2, 6.
" " 21. Lev. iv. 3, 14.
" " 22. " viii. 14, 15, 19, 24.
" " 23. " iv. 15, 24.
" " 24. " " 14, 20.
" " 26. Num. x. 8, 10.
" " 31. Lev. vii. 12.
" " 35. " iii. 16.
Num. xv. 5, 7, 10.
" xxx. 2. " ix. 10, 11.
" " 3. Exod. xii. 6, 18.
" " 18. " xii. 43, etc.
" " 21. " xii. 15; xiii. 6.
" " 22. Deut. xxxiii. 10.
" " 27. Num. vi. 23.

I am aware that the revolutionary school of critics depreciate the testimony of Chronicles, as compiled at a later date than Kings, and lay stress on the fact that the Passover of Hezekiah is passed over in silence in the earlier book. But so broad-minded a critic as Bertheau reminds us that this is no ground for surprise, as Kings notices matters concerning the restoration of public worship or its reforms only very slightly. But, he adds, since it admits of no doubt that Hezekiah uprooted idolatry (2 Kings xviii. 22), the great spring feast of Passover and Unleavened Bread must have been celebrated in a way more corresponding to the Law of Moses than hitherto. It is, he continues, probable, that even during the reign of idolatry, festivals were held at the times appointed by the Law for the great Jewish feasts. He, also, calls attention to the fact that the invitation of Hezekiah to the Ten Tribes to attend the Passover was sent while King Hoshea still reigned, and Samaria had not yet fallen. It was a last attempt to bring them back to their God. Bertheau, *Die B. der Chronik* (1873), p. 389.

that the worth of its services depended on the spirit in which they were rendered, and demanded a life in accordance with the moral as well as external precepts of the Law. But, for the time, their words fell in great part unheeded. Deeply corrupted with the vices of neighbouring heathenism, the nation resented the puritan earnestness of the nobler members of the order, and, while ready to worship Jehovah at the command of the king, ignored Him in their daily life. The prophets were, in fact, in advance of their day. Their religious conceptions were too noble for their contemporaries. The world had not as yet seen a faith in which rites and ceremonies were not supreme, and could not realize the outward forms of worship as merely symbols of a lofty spiritual life. To the average Jew, as to the heathen, priestly acts and external compliances constituted the essence of religion. The reformation effected by Hezekiah was thus, to a great extent, superficial. The mass of the priests and of the people, and most of the prophets, were ready to go back to idolatry when it was introduced by Manasseh, as here, in England, the bulk of the nation and of the clergy returned at once to Romanism, when restored by Mary, after the death of Edward the Sixth.

It is difficult to realize the state of the petty kingdom of Hezekiah, in his last years of peace and prosperity. Its very insignificance is apt to be forgotten. The home of the one true religion which was to educate the world for God, it was yet no larger than the small triangle in the north of England defined by the towns of Stockton, Whitehaven, and Berwick-upon-Tweed; that is, it was rather smaller than Yorkshire. The re-conquest of the Philistine country had given it once more the partial command of the rich slopes of the Shephelah on the west. But, on the south, its narrow

bounds soon reached the parched uplands of the Negeb, and Judah itself, since the destruction of its primitive forests, was only a region of bare gray hills, intersected by a labyrinth of narrow and mostly stony glens. Still, the climate was favourable, and what soil there was yielded abundantly. Careful terracing of the hill-sides, and laborious cultivation of the valleys and straths, returned a rich harvest of grapes, olives, grain, and garden produce; the elements of a simple but abundant maintenance for town and country, if the ancient land laws had been still universally in force. The results of these laws are, indeed, still seen in the traces of comparative fertility and a settled population even in the bare uplands where there is now only desolation. Ruins exist far south even of Beersheba, in which beams of wood are found, indicating the existence of trees in the neighbourhood at one time. Long walls to catch and retain, for irrigation, the waters of storms, are met with running across what are now scorched and desert valleys. Wells, long deserted, are numerous. For miles, the hill-sides are covered with low stone heaps, still called "grape mounds," and once used to train vines over, where now all is barrenness. The valley of Eshcol, famous for its grapes, seems to have been far south of Beersheba, in what is now arid wildness. All over the southern part of the Negeb, moreover, now utterly waste, there are ruins of many towns, in some of which are stone aqueducts, large reservoirs, and remains of large public buildings. Ruins of forts, churches, towns, terraces, grape mounds, and aqueducts are, in fact, numerous in all directions. One set of ruins was called by Professor Palmer "The city of cisterns," a vast connected series of cisterns running under the hills on which the wreck of the town is found. Here other broader valleys, still rich in

verdure during the rainy season, are even now met with. Some of these remains are, indeed, of much more recent date than the time of Hezekiah, but others are very ancient. The laws respecting the division of the land and its tenure, dating from the wilderness sojourn, were based on the soundest principles. Passing from the unsettled life of tents, the community were to be cultivators of the soil, and it was therefore divided inalienably among the whole population. Every peasant was made a landowner, but rather in trust for his descendants than as a freeholder. Jehovah Himself remained absolute owner in chief,[1] the occupants being only His stewards,[2] holding possession under stringent conditions. The first fruits, the first born of all farm stock, and the tenth of all produce, must be paid, in the name of God, to the priests, the Levites, and the poor. Every seventh year the land must lie fallow, trusting to His bounty in the preceding harvests.[3]

These conditions honourably satisfied, the title of the landowner was indefeasible. No tribe could seize land belonging to any other.[4] A king could not rob his meanest subject of his inheritance; for even Ahab obtained Naboth's vineyard only through the judicial murder of its owner, under a false charge of blasphemy and treason.[5] The absolute transfer of land was forbidden. At most, it could only be made over to a lessee till the year of jubilee, a period not exceeding forty-nine years. Moreover, even when thus for a time alienated, the nearest of blood—the goël or redeemer—had at all times the right to buy it back, that it might at once revert to the family of the original owner.[6]

[1] Lev. xxv. 23. [2] Luke xvi. 2, 3. 1 Cor. iv. 2. 1 Pet. iv. 10.
[3] Exod. xxiii. 10, ff. Lev. xxv. 3, 4; xxvi 34. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 21.
[4] Num. xxxvi. 9. [5] 1 Kings xxi. 2 Sam. xvi. 4; xix. 29.
[6] Ruth iv. 3. Jer. xxxii. 7.

Such were the land laws of Judah, or, rather, such had they been. But the noble ideal of a community in which all enjoyed practical equality, had long passed away. With the development of the monarchy and the gradual rise of courtiers and nobility and rich men, fatal abuses crept in. Usurers had taken advantage of periods of depression or temporary misfortune, to oppress their brethren. House had been added to house and field to field by these land robbers, till great estates had largely supplanted a peasant proprietary.[1] Many yeomen had even been driven from their holdings by violence; others by legal frauds.[2] Wholesale evictions were common.[3] The poor were devoured from off the land.[4] The rural population had to wander to the towns, or become labourers on ground that had been their own. Wealth accumulated and men decayed. A proletariat had been created by the tyranny of the moneyed class, aided by bad laws or usage. Discontent prevailed among large numbers who still clung to their holdings, and it found its utterance through the prophets. Men widely complained that in bad years they had to mortgage their lands, vineyards, and houses, to buy corn or to pay the taxes.[5] Splendour reigned in the mansions of the few, but deepening poverty in the cottages and cabins of the many. Under such circumstances national decline might be arrested for a time by a wise and good ruler, but could not permanently be warded off.

With the increase of population through successive centuries, and the consequent clearing of the woodlands, there must, as has been noticed, have been a gradual diminution of the rainfall, in the time of the later kings, increasing

[1] Isa. v. 8. [2] Mic. ii. 2. [3] Mic. ii. 9. Hab. ii. 9–12. [4] Prov. xxx. 14.
[5] Neh. v. 2. The taxes in this case were for a foreign ruler, but it must have been the same before the captivity.

the difficulties of the husbandman and making his gains more precarious. Yet careful and assiduous industry, as we have seen, made much even of the barren chalk hills of Judah; huge underground cisterns filled during the winter and spring rains, sufficing usually, with the fertilizing Mediterranean night mists of the summer, to water the crops during the hot and dry months. In Egypt their forefathers had had to raise water from the sunken level of the Nile, to irrigate their fields and patches, but no creaking water wheels, turned by oxen or by the painful treading of the human foot, were needed in Palestine.[1] What water there was, was led hither and thither over the soil, as in the irrigation of our own meadows,[2] as at this day no hedges divided the fields or gardens of neighbours; boundary stones, as on the continent still, shewed each his limits.[3] The richer landowners employed slaves and hired labourers, under an overseer,[4] for field work, but were not themselves above taking part in the labours of their subordinates.[5] The long fallow of the seventh or sabbath year, gave the soil periodical rest; the burning of the stubble and chaff of each harvest, fertilized it.[6] Wheat and barley were the principal crops on the hill slopes and in the open bottoms; a fringe of vetches or

[1] Deut. xi. 10. A man sits before a wheel on which buckets are fixed, and turns it by drawing to him one set of spokes with his hands and pushing another away from him with his feet. Reference is also perhaps made to the rivulets of water opened and closed with the foot, which are still common in Palestine, where I constantly saw them. [2] Job xxxviii. 25. Prov. xxi. 1.

[3] Deut. xix. 14; xxvii. 17. Prov. xxii. 28. Job xxiv. 2. Hos. v. 10. It is curious to find in an inscription from Babylon, dating about 1400 years before Christ, heavy curses against any one who removed a landmark. He who injured the land or destroyed the boundary stone, or removed it, whoever he be, "may the gods the lords of this land—make his name desolate, curse him with an unspeakable curse, desolate him with utter desolation, gather his posterity together for evil, not for good. Until the day of his departure from life may he come to ruin; may the gods rend him asunder, and may his name be trodden down." Comp. Ps. cix.

[4] Ruth ii. 5. [5] 1 Sam. xi. 5. 1 Kings xix. 19.

[6] Exod. xv. 7. Isa. v. 24. 2 Kings ix. 37. Jer. ix. 32; xvi. 4, etc.

other inferior produce often protecting the edges of the field. The eye rested on patches of lentiles, beans, millet, cummin, cucumbers, melons, or flax.[1] The cotton plant seems also to have been cultivated on the warm coast plain, as it still is.[2] The terraced hills were rich with citron and olive trees, intermingled with the apricot, quince, plum, mulberry, and fig; while the date, the pomegranate, the lime, the almond, and the prickly pear, flourished in appropriate spots.

The sowing of the winter crops began towards the end of October, the early rains having then fallen, mostly during the nights, and at intervals. Rude ploughs, drawn by oxen, had already opened the soil; an iron-shod goad then, as now, urging on the slow-moving cattle.[3] Land was not indeed thought ready for grain till it had been ploughed more than once, the custom being, perhaps, like that of our own day, to plough it three or four times before sowing, during an interval of a whole year.[4] The clods having been broken up by a mattock,[5] the surface was finally levelled by a harrow.[6] November saw the husbandman sowing his beans, peas, lentiles, and vetches; a fortnight later he sowed his barley, and in another month his wheat, sometimes broadcast, sometimes in rows;[7] care being taken that the seed should never be mixed, as in this case it fell to the

[1] 2 Sam. xxiii. 11. Ezek. iv. 9. 2 Sam. xvii. 28. Isa. xxviii. 25; i. 8. Josh. ii. 6. Hos. ii. 9. Prov. xxxi. 13.

[2] 1 Chron. iv. 21. "Fine linen" should be "cotton." Pausanias (A.D. 160–180) speaks of "Hebrew cotton," v. 5, 2.

[3] 1 Sam. xi. 7. Amos vi. 12. Acts ix. 5.

[4] Wetstein, in Delitzsch's *Iesaia*, pp. 389, ff. Perhaps this is what Isaiah refers to when he speaks of the Jews as sowing and reaping for the first time, in the third year after the withdrawal of the Assyrians (Isa. xxxvii. 30).

[5] Isa. xxviii. 24. [6] Isa. xxviii. 25.

[7] Isa. xxviii. 25. The words "principal wheat" should, apparently, be "wheat in rows." See art. "Sorah," in Mühlau und Volck. Strabo says that sowing in rows was common among the Babylonians, as securing larger crops.

share of the temple.[1] The seed needed, moreover, to be Levitically clean; that is, gathered from Jewish soil, by those who themselves were ceremonially free from defilement.[2] The summer crops were sown at the end of January and in February, in anticipation of the "latter rains" in March and April, on which their yield depended.

A brief respite from field work followed, but it was only brief, for the barley harvest in these warm regions began, round Jericho, in the first weeks of April; that of the coast plains, and then of the whole country, falling before the sickle by the end of the month. Watchers guarded the unfenced crop as it approached ripeness,[3] but the wayfarer was always free to pluck what ears he needed, if he were hungry.[4] The reapers, however, who, if like those of to-day, sat on their haunches when at work, and cut off the straw very high up, could not begin their task till the first ripe sheaf, gathered from the valleys near Jerusalem, had been waved before God in thanksgiving, at the opening of the Passover rejoicings.[5] Wheat harvest began round Jericho in the second half of May, the higher lands, elsewhere, yellowing for the sickle a month later. The close of June saw the fields rough with long stubble over all the land, and forthwith the cattle were seen treading out the grain on the round open-air threshing floors on the hill-tops, or in the long sweeps of the glens. Before Pentecost, or the Feast of Weeks, fifty days from the Passover, all the grain harvest was housed, and the people free to return thanks at the second great yearly feast, at which the priest before the altar waved to all points of the compass loaves of the new

[1] Lev. xix. 19. Deut. xxii. 9.
[2] Michaelis, *Mos. Recht*, vol. iv. § 218, p. 329.
[3] Jer. iv. 17.
[4] Matt. xii. 1.
[5] *Helon's Pilgrimage*, vol. i. p. 287.

corn, and a portion of the new flour, to express the gratitude of the nation to Jehovah for the new bread of another season.[1]

September and October saw the gathering and treading of the ripe grapes, and the plucking of the ruddy pomegranates; after which came the stripping of the olive trees, and the pressing of their berries for the golden oil. Then, at last, followed the third great festival of Tabernacles, the national harvest home, amidst seven days' rejoicings. The old year had closed with September; October began the months of another.

In such a reign as that of Ahaz, the sacred feasts had doubtless been much neglected; but under a ruler like Hezekiah the religious feelings of the better part of the nation found joyful expression. The sixty-fifth Psalm, which bears the name of David, seems to have been used as a harvest hymn in these later times, alike in the temple courts and at the household altar of many a father in Israel.

"LXV. 1. Praise is due to Thee, O God, in Zion,[2]
To Thee shall the vow be performed!
2. O Thou that hearest prayer, to Thee shall all flesh come.
3. Our iniquities are too great for me to think of;
But Thou wilt hide our transgressions from Thine eyes.
4. Happy is the man whom Thou choosest,
And causest to approach unto Thee,
That he may dwell in Thy courts.
He shall be satisfied with the goodness of Thy house,
Even of Thy holy temple.

"O satisfy us with the delights of Thy house, Thy holy temple!
5. By terrible deeds, in Thy righteousness, Thou hearest us,
O God of our salvation:
Who art the hope of all the ends of the earth,
And of those afar off, beyond the sea.

[1] *Helon's Pilgrimage*, vol. ii. p. 192. [2] Ps. lxv.

6. Who by Thy might settest fast the mountains,
Girding Thyself with power!
7. Who stillest the noise of the seas—the noise of their waves,
And the tumult of the nations;
8. So that the dwellers in the farthest parts
Fear the signs of Thy presence.

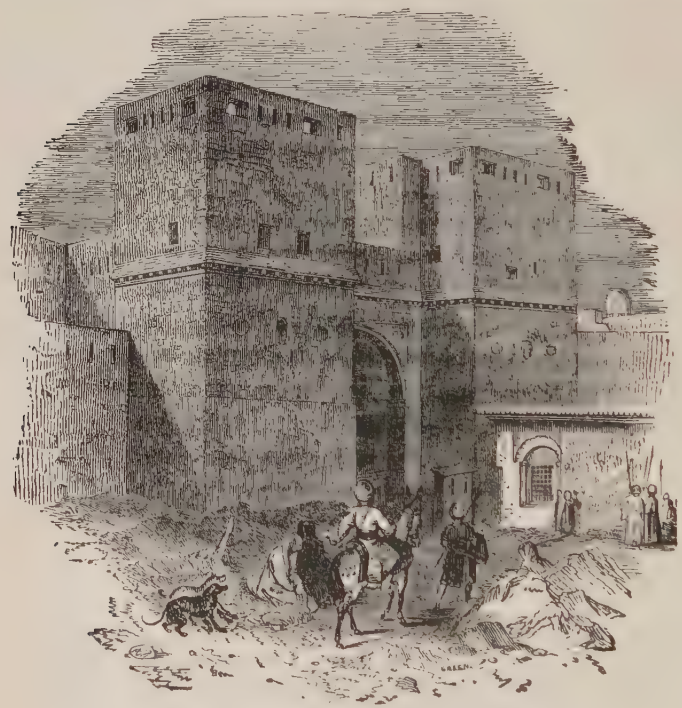
"East and west; when morning rises, and when the night comes forth,
Thou makest to rejoice;
9. Thou visitest the earth; and waterest it abundantly;
Thou enrichest it greatly (from the floods above)—the river of God—
Which is full of water.
Thou providest men corn, when Thou hast thus prepared the earth for it;
10. Thou soakest the furrows; Thou washest down the clods,
Softening them by Thy showers, and blessing the springing grain.
11. Thou crownest the year with Thy goodness;
The paths (of Thy wheels in the clouds) drop fatness,
12. Yea, the pastures of the wilderness drop with it;
The joyful hills put on robes of beauty;
13. The meadows are set off with flocks;
The valleys with waving corn:
Men shout, and sing for joy!"

The yield of the soil in good years not only supplied the wants of the people, but left a surplus of grain for exportation.[1] In Solomon's day over eighty thousand bushels of wheat were paid yearly to Hiram of Tyre,[2] and in Isaiah's time, and later, the Phœnicians imported the grain they required, not only from Egypt, but from various districts of Palestine, especially the centre and north, and from east of the Jordan.[3]

We have to picture the landscape of Judah in those years as dotted with numerous open, flat-roofed villages, and small walled towns,[4] fortified according to the rude ideas

[1] Gen. xxvi. 12. Matt. xiii. 8.
[2] 1 Kings v. 11.
[3] Isa. xxiii. 3. Ezek. xxvii. 17. Acts xii. 20. Ezra iii. 7.
[4] Deut. iii. 5. Esth. ix. 19.

of the age. These strongholds, however, had mostly been destroyed by the Assyrians, but they were gradually being rebuilt; though the country must still have exhibited many traces of Sennacherib's invasion. The huge gates of the



MODERN ORIENTAL GATE—BAB EL NASR, CAIRO.
(From Lane's *Arabian Nights*.)

more important of these fortresses, set off by a text of the law cut in the wall over them,[1] stood open by day: but the massive leaves were closed at twilight, and secured by heavy iron or brazen bars.[2] To strengthen these entrances to the

[1] This is still seen in the East.

[2] Josh. ii. 5, 7.

town, they were generally surmounted by towers,[1] which supplied accommodation for the guard, and a look-out, from which warders, at least in dangerous times, could announce, by voice or horn-blowing, the approach of danger.[2] In many cases the archway of the gate was protected by defences on the inner side also,[3] the space between serving as a place of muster for the guard.[4] Open ground stretched out before the gates; forming a busy market place in the early morning, the lounge of the citizens in the cool of the day, the shew ground for royal pageants, the forum of public business, and the gathering place in public movements. Most of the streets within the walls were too narrow for loaded camels to pass each other,[5] though in a few, carts and chariots could move freely.[6] Only those spots, however, where streets crossed each other offered vacant spaces for an audience to a prophet[7] or other public teacher, or for vanity or religious pretence to parade themselves.[8] Sanitary precautions were unknown. The streets were often deep with mire,[9] or cumbered with still worse impurities, like the side streets of Jerusalem or Damascus, or, indeed, of any Eastern town, at the present day. All kinds of refuse were thrown into them, to be eaten by hungry bands of town dogs which roamed through the streets by night, as in Eastern cities now, and, if we may judge from the usage of

[1] 2 Sam. xviii. 33.

[2] 2 Sam. xviii. 24. 2 Kings ix. 17. Jer. vi. 17. Ezek. xxxiii. 3.

[3] 2 Sam. xviii. 24. [4] 2 Kings vii. 10. Neh. xiii. 19. Jer. xxxvii. 13.

[5] Jos., *Bell.* In Cairo many streets are not above a yard wide.

[6] 2 Sam. xv. 1. 1 Kings i. 5. Jer. xvii. 25.

[7] Prov. i. 21. Luke xiii. 26. [8] Matt. vi. 2, 5.

[9] Ps. xviii. 42, etc. The word is Tit. It is applied to the deep mud in the bottom of subterranean cisterns (Jer. xxxviii. 6), or on the banks of the Nile after its overflow (Job xli. 30; Ps. lxix. 14). The word suchah = sweepings, "filth," "dung," is used in Isa. v. 25. Chomer is used in Isa. x. 6, and is generally translated "clay;" sometimes "mortar."

to-day, the sewage of the houses ran into them, and often collected into foul pools. Arrangements for the comfort of foot passengers seem to have been unknown, for, notwithstanding the statement of Josephus that Solomon laid the great lines of commerce with black basalt, it is doubtful whether there were any paved roads or streets before the time of Christ. Herod Agrippa II. appears, indeed, to have paved the narrow lanes of Jerusalem for the first time,[1] and the earliest system of city drainage appears to have been introduced at Cæsarea, by Herod the Great.[2] The various crafts had their booths or shops, mere recesses, in the open front of which, equivalent to our window, the dealer sat, and these were in their respective quarters or bazaars,[3] called by their names. Thus, the bakers,[4] the goldsmiths, the merchants,[5] the wool dealers, the braziers, the cloth sellers,[6] etc., had their various streets,

A Detached Eastern House, without Projecting Windows.

[1] Jos., *Ant.*, XX. ix. 7. [2] Jos., *Ant.*, XV. ix. 6; XVI. v. 3.

[3] Bazaar, *Persian* = a market.

[4] Jer. xxxvii. 21. The "tower of the furnaces," or rather "ovens," was probably near the bakers' street. Here at any rate were the public ovens built of the clay found in the valley below. It must have been in this part of the Tyropœon that the potteries were situated, which gave their name to the gate of the potteries, mistranslated "east gate" in the A. V. (Jer. xix. 2). [5] Neh. iii. 31. [6] Jos., *Bell.*, V. viii. 9.

each of which, like the others in the city, had its own gate, which was shut when necessary.[1] The business part of the towns, moreover, was a distinct district, apart from the houses.[2] These were generally of more than one story,[3] with flat continuous roofs, protected at the edges by a parapet,[4] lattices closing the windows facing the street, over which they often projected, so as almost to meet from the opposite sides, as in Cairo now.[5] When large enough, each dwelling had an inner court; the centre of family life. Words from the Law looked down from over the outer door or gateway, and portions of it, at least in later times, were inserted into the right post of the inner doors, or nailed against them.[6] There was no such thing as lighting the streets, as there is none in Eastern towns, even now, and honest citizens were careful to be early at home; or, if

A Mezuzah or Cylinder containing a Portion of the Law, fixed on a Door Post.

[1] Eccles. xii. 4.

[2] Zeph. i. 11. Maktesh = the mortar, was a locality in Jerusalem.

[3] 2 Kings i. 2; iv. 10.

[4] 2 Sam. xi. 2. Deut. xxii. 8.

[5] Judg. v. 28. Lindsay, p. 27.

[6] The Rabbis, in later ages, invented what is called the Mezuzah = "door post," in fancied compliance with the command in Deut. vi. 9, to write certain words on door posts and gates. It is a piece of parchment, prepared by Rabbinical rules, and inscribed with the verses Deut. vi. 4-9, and xi. 13-21. The slip is enclosed in a cylinder of wood, tin, or lead, a hole cut in which shews the word Shaddai, written on the outside of the parchment. One of these Scripture charms is nailed obliquely to the door posts of all the rooms of a house, on the right-hand side, that every one who enters may remember that the eye of God is ever upon him; a thought blessed in the extreme. Unfortunately, in too many cases, it has sunk to a mere superstition: the Mezuzah being regarded as in itself a charm, to guard the house from evil. A person going out or entering touches it with his finger, and kisses the finger that

necessarily abroad after dark, carried lamps with them.[1] Without this precaution one was exposed to be attacked by the troops of half-wild street dogs, or arrested by the watchmen.[2] Hence the town seemed deserted by night, except when a marriage procession, with lamps and torches, broke the "outer darkness,"[3] which, compared with the brightness inside the houses, became a proverbial comparison for misfortune in contrast to happiness.[4] In the time of Nehemiah, if not earlier, the town gates were closed at sunset on Friday evenings, and not re-opened till the Sabbath ended, at twilight, on Saturday.[5]

Where peace was so uncertain, the size and prosperity of towns depended on their strength and position, and few of them were without walls. The villages, like those of Europe in the middle ages, were generally near some strong place, and were hence spoken of as its daughters.[6] Most towns were on the tops of heights, or in the recesses of narrow valleys, like Shechem and Hebron, and it was to its strong position that Jerusalem owed its comparative greatness. Yet even it was, at best, a small place, according to modern standards; its population not exceeding, perhaps, 50,000; if we may judge from the fact that its fighting men, carried

has touched it; believing, not seldom, that while it remains undefiled, it protects the house from the angel of death, from evil dreams, and from evil spirits. The three names of an angel —mere fancies of the Rabbis—are sometimes put below the word Shaddai on the back of the roll, prayer being offered to him for help and protection. "Whoever," says the Talmud, "has the phylacteries bound to his head and arm, the fringes affixed to his Tallith, and the Mezuzah nailed on his door post, is safe from sin." "In thy name, Kusu Bemochsas Kusu," prays the outgoer, "may I go forth and prosper;" or, rising above supplication to an angel: "The Lord guard my going out and coming in, for ever." On the Mezuzah, see Buxtorff, *Synagoga Judaica*, pp. 381-387. Herzog, *Ency.*, vol. iv. p. 682. Barclay's *Talmud*, p. 362, ff. Sacred texts were written over the doors of ancient Egyptian houses. Wilkinson, vol. ii. p. 102.

[1] Matt. xxv. 1.
[2] Ps. xxii. 16, 20. Cant. v. 7. Isa. xxi. 11, 12.
[3] Matt. xxv. 6.
[4] Matt. viii. 12.
[5] Neh. xiii. 19. Isa. lx. 11. Rev. xxi. 25.
[6] Num. xxi. 25-32. Josh. xv. 45, etc.

off by Nebuchadnezzar, with Jehoiachin,[1] numbered 10,000. Other towns were smaller. Thus, at the time of the conquest, Ai had 12,000 inhabitants,[2] and, though Gibeon was larger than this,[3] the population of Gibeah, as late as the days of the Judges, was apparently only about 3,000.[4]

The busiest time of the day in these ancient communities was the early morning, when the country people thronged the open space before the gates to sell their produce,[5] as is still the custom, and the magistrates and judges, or even the king, sat in the shadow of the gateway, deciding public or private disputes.[6] During the day every one who could sought shelter from the heat, but, in the cool of the evening, the sea-wind blew, from about eight or nine to ten o'clock,[7] bringing a delightful coolness, of which the citizens were glad to take advantage, by leaving their houses and narrow streets for a pleasant saunter or gossip outside the gates.[8] In the deep shadow of the houses the children could play at all hours, but the old men or women who watched them were fain to sit in the cool of their doorways, staff in hand, till the sun went down.[9]

The towns, like the villages, were governed by a body of elders, the humbler counterpart of the chiefs of tribes and clans, who still ruled each generation, as their predecessors had done from before the days of the Exodus. Jehoshaphat[10] had associated with them in the legal business of their locality trained judges chosen from among the priests, as the

[1] 2 Kings xxiv. 14. Riehm, p. 693. Thenius fancies it had a population of only about 17,000. [2] Josh. viii. 25. [3] Josh. x. 2.
[4] Judg. xx. 15; there were 700 fighting men.
[5] Neh. xiii. 15, 20.
[6] Prov. xxii. 22; xxiv. 7. Deut. xvi. 18. Zech. viii. 16. Ruth iv. 1, ff.
[7] Furrer, art. "Winde," in Schenkel.
[8] Gen. xix. 1; xxxiv. 20. Ps. lxix. 12. Prov. i. 20, 21; xxxi. 23, 31.
[9] Zech. viii. 4, 5. Jer. vi. 11. Matt. xi. 16. [10] 2 Chron. xix. 5.

educated class—that is, familiar with the Law—those for ecclesiastical matters being Levites;[1] but the elders were still the chief recognized magistrates of each locality. In Jerusalem a High Court had been set up by the same king, with secular and priestly judges.[2] For though, in earlier times, elders of different ranks had been the sole judges,[3] this ancient simplicity soon passed away. But from the very first, under whatever name, the functions of local government had been carried on by local magistrates,[4] and there were even town halls for their convenience. The bazaar also in each town was under the charge of a special inspector.[5]

A wise precaution, unknown till very recently in our own country, strictly forbade the burial of the dead within the limits of any community. The cemeteries, shaded by numerous trees, lay outside the walls; the multitude resting in ordinary tombs, hewn out in the sides of the countless hills, for burial was impossible in a country so rocky; the rich in costly chambers in the rocks, where the departed were "gathered to their fathers;"[6] great stone doors or massive stone coverings—the "Gates of Death"[7]—shutting in their dark abodes. Ancient rock tombs of all sizes and degrees of finish are hence innumerable in Palestine still. Orchards and gardens, where the soil permitted, stretched round the towns and cities.[8] In nearly every landscape clumps of

[1] Deut. xxi. 5. 1 Chron. xxiii. 4; xxvi. 29. [2] Deut. xvii. 9; xix. 17.

[3] Josh. xx. 4. In Num. xxxv. 12, 24, ff., the word "congregation" is used where in the parallel text in Joshua the elders are named. These may very naturally have been spoken of as the congregation, from their being its representatives. It is to be remembered, moreover, that as trials took place in the open air, a crowd of bystanders always gathered round, associating themselves in the proceedings, as they still do in the East, as if they also were judges.

[4] Jos., *Vita.*, 12, 13, 27, 34, 61, 68; *Bell.*, II. xxi. 3; V. iv. 2.

[5] Jos., *Ant.*, XVIII. vi. 2. [6] Judg. ii. 10. 2 Kings xxii. 20. 2 Chron. xxxiv. 28.

[7] Ps. ix. 13. [8] Deut. xx. 19. Jos., *Bell.*, V. ii. 2.

olives, or single olive trees, with their gray foliage, met the eye, and yielded the rich oil which was a chief product of the land.[1] It was used for the preparation of all kinds of food, and even for the household lamps, and it was also in great demand for anointing the person. The supply, however, exceeded the home consumption so greatly that a large quantity was exported to Egypt and Phœnicia.[2] The king himself had "oil gardens" on the fertile slopes of the Shephelah,[3] and "The Mount of Olives," Gethsemane,[4] and Bezetha,[5] shew its abundance in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem. The stony slopes of the hills, reverberating the heat, and the moist winds of night, favoured the growth of the vine. Great vineyards are now, however, found only round Hebron, wine being forbidden to the general population, who are Mohammedans, so that its use is confined to Christians, who alone produce it. But vines still run up the houses and shade the roofs, all over Palestine, or twist through the branches of the fig tree, making a cool arbour in the cottage gardens.[6]

In Hezekiah's day the grapes of Engedi, of Hebron, of Shechem, of Carmel, and of Jezreel, were famous.[7] The wine of Lebanon bore a great name, and the luxuriant vines of northern Moab were hardly less renowned.[8] On the shores of Gennesaret grapes might be plucked for ten months in the year.[9] Bethhaccerem—"The House of the Vine"—was not far from Bethlehem. The market of Jerusalem had ripe clusters from Jericho and the coast as early

[1] Deut. viii. 8, etc. [2] Hos. xii. 1. Ezek. xxvii. 17. 1 Kings v. 11. Ezra iii. 7.
[3] 1 Chron. xxvii. 28. [4] = Oil press.
[5] Place of Olives. Riehm, p. 699.
[6] Mic. iv. 4.
[7] Cant. i. 14. Num. xiii. 24. Judg. ix. 27. 2 Chron. xxvi. 10. 1 Kings xxi. 1.
[8] Cant. viii. 11. Hos. xiv. 7 Isa. xvi. 8. Jer. xlviii. 32.
[9] Jos., *Bell.*, III. x. 8.

as the end of July, though the harvest was not ripe over the country till the middle of September or the beginning of October.

The literary glory of the reigns of David, Solomon, and Jehoshaphat, marking as it did the prosperity of their times, naturally shewed itself once more under Hezekiah. Not only were the famous productions of the genius of the past —its Proverbs and Psalms—rescued from oblivion and collected into a permanent form ; the contemporary prophecies of Isaiah and Micah were engrossed and preserved, and the sacred poetry of the nation received noble additions from now unknown writers. The triumph over Sennacherib had roused the soul of the nation and was sung by many bards. Some of their lyrics have been given in the last chapter of the preceding volume, but such an event was a fruitful theme of poetry.[1] The forty-eighth Psalm celebrates the humiliation of the Great King no less vividly than those already given :

"XLVIII. 1. Great is Jehovah, and greatly to be praised
In the City of our God; His holy mountain!
2. Beautiful, in its swelling height, is Mount Zion;
The joy of the whole earth.

"Far as the utmost north, in the city of the Great King,"[2]
3. Elohim has made Himself known, in her palaces,
As a sure defence of His people.[3]

"4. For, lo, the kings gathered against Zion;
They pressed on together;
5. They saw—they marvelled—
They were troubled—they fled;

[1] Ps. xlviii.
[2] Nineveh.
[3] Bredenkamp, *Gesetz und Propheten*, pp. 144-5.

6. Trembling seized them;
Pain, as of a travailing woman!
7. As the great Tarshish ships are scattered by an eastern storm,
(So were they shattered and destroyed!)

"8. As we have heard (in hymn and song)
In the city of Jehovah of Hosts—the city of our God—
So have we (ourselves) seen!
'God will preserve her for ever!'[1]

"9. We have thought on Thy loving kindness, O God,
In the midst of Thy temple!
10. As Thy name, O God, is known to the ends of the earth,
So, now, in Thy praise (as a God who defends His people);
Thy right hand is full of righteousness!

"11. Let Mount Zion rejoice; let the daughters of Judah be glad,
Because of Thy judgments!
12. Walk round Zion—make a circuit of her walls—
Count her towers—13. notice her ramparts—
Number her (castle-like) palaces—
That ye may tell to the generation to come
14. That the God (who has protected them) is our God,
And will be our champion for ever."[2]

The sixty-sixth Psalm[3] has been regarded as another relic of these great days, when the remembrance of a deliverance hardly less wonderful than that of the Red Sea, filled all hearts and kindled the imagination.

"LXVI. 1. Make a loud noise unto Elohim, all lands;[4]
2. Strike the harp in honour of His name;
Give Him the glory which is His due praise!
3. Say unto Elohim: 'How terrible are Thy works,
Through the greatness of Thy power must Thine enemies submit to Thee.

[1] It is to be noticed that Zion is here, already, in Hezekiah's time, the "Holy Mountain" of Jehovah; that is, the religious centre of the nation. It did not, therefore, become so, first, after the Exile, as the supporters of Wellhausen's theory maintain.

[2] Ewald. De Wette. Von Lengerke. Kay. Hitzig. Moll. Hupfeld. Delitzsch.

[3] Ewald thinks it is made up of two Psalms, the first ending at the 13th verse.

[4] Ps. lxvi.

4. All lands will do homage to Thee and praise Thee on the harp:
They will strike the harp to Thy name.'

"5. Come and see the great deeds of Elohim,
Whose might is irresistible by the sons of men

"6. He turned the sea into dry land,
They went through the flood on foot—
There did we glory in being His!
7. His—who by His might rules for ever—
His eyes keep watch over the nations—
The rebellious—let them not raise their heads!

"8. O bless our God, ye peoples,
Raise loud the voice of His praise,
9. Who lifted our souls from death to life,
And did not suffer our feet to give way!

"10. For Thou, Elohim, hast proved us;
Tried us in the furnace, as silver is tried;
11. Thou broughtest us under the net,
Thou laidst a heavy load on our loins;
12. Thou lettedst the worthless ride over our head:
We passed through the fire and the flood;
But Thou hast vouchsafed us a great deliverance!
"13. I will go into Thy house with whole burnt-offerings:

I will pay Thee my vows;
14. (Vows) uttered with open lips;
(Vows) proclaimed by my mouth when I was in trouble.
15. Whole burnt-offerings of fatted sheep will I bring Thee,
With the smoke of the sacrifice of rams;[1]
I will offer to Thee oxen and young goats.

"16. Come, hear me tell, all ye that fear God,
What He has done for my soul!
17. I cried aloud to Him with my mouth,
His high praise was on my tongue.
18. For if, in my heart, I had looked aside to iniquity,
The Lord of all would not have heard me.

[1] Rams were the burnt-offerings of the high priests, the princes, and the people. The use of the plural shews that the psalmist speaks for the whole worshippers, not for himself alone.

"19. But, verily, Elohim has heard;
He has attended to the voice of my prayer.
20. Blessed be Elohim,
Who has not turned away my prayer,
Nor His mercy from me." [1]

That the only remaining literature of a people should be so wholly and sublimely religious as odes like this, is a peculiarity which marks that of the Hebrews alone. The existence of one Living God; our dependence on Him; His holiness, and the necessity of spiritual religion, to please Him; sacrifices and offerings having no worth without it; are assumed as truths respecting which there is no question. To obtain His favour, to trace His hand in all human affairs, national and individual, to praise His goodness or to implore His forgiveness, is the single thought of the writer. The one subject of the only collection of Hebrew books we possess is—God.

This striking characteristic must be remembered if we would correctly estimate the religious enthusiasm under Hezekiah, or the mortal struggle against heathenism under his son, Manasseh. The national party, zealous for the worship of Jehovah, the God of their fathers, looked back to a golden age under David, but, since his day, had seen the rise and occasional triumph of foreign heathenism, countenanced by a number of their kings, and by the court and upper classes. Under Athaliah they had maintained a fierce struggle against the introduction of Phœnician idolatry; under Ahaz against the heathenism of the Euphrates. Headed by prophets, they had crushed the former, in the reign of Jehoash, and the latter in that of Hezekiah, disdaining to substitute for their national faith that of any

[1] This Psalm appears, from its language, to be the composition of Hezekiah.

other kingdom, however great or powerful. The glory of Tyre or of Nineveh might be an argument to the foreign party in their midst, for the greatness of the gods by whom it was claimed to have been secured; *they* clung to Him who had opened for their fathers a way through the sea; who had made David victorious from the Mediterranean to the Euphrates, and who now, in these last years, had smitten, by an awful miracle, the armies of the Great King, and made them flee from under the walls of His chosen Zion.

But as in all communities, in every age, it was only a minority who cherished, with a full and intelligent conviction, the great principles which thus for a time were triumphant. The mass of the people, now, as always, passively yielded themselves to the spirit of the day; ready to follow Hezekiah's reforms, in the excitement of the hour, but no less so to pass over to the heathen party, should it again get the ascendency. Two forces contended for supremacy; the national party, or Jehovah worshippers—under the prophets; and the patrician party, who sighed for the glitter of foreign manners and the fancied security of foreign alliances, and, to secure both, were eager to adopt the heathenism of the neighbouring monarchies.

CHAPTER II.

MANASSEH.

JUDAH.

	Auth. Version.	Riehm.	Schenkel.	Rösch.	Winer.	Graetz.
MANASSEH,	B.C. 695–642	686–643	687–642	695–640	696–641	695–641

EGYPT.

TIRHAKAH, OR TAHARKA, . . . B.C. 705–687.
PIANCHI, ... 687–664.
PSAM-METI-CHUS I. (uniting the native and Ethiopian dynasties by marriage), ... 664–612.

ASSYRIA.

SENNACHERIB, . . B.C. 705–681.
ESARHADDON, . . 681–668.
ASSURBANIPAL (SARDANAPALUS?), . . 668–620.

PHŒNICIA.

ELULÆUS,
ITHOBAL II. (tributary to Sennacherib).
ABDIMULKUTH, King of Sidon, deposed by Esarhaddon.
BAAL, King of Tyre.
ISKIAKAP, King of Byblus.
KULUBAAL, King of Arvad.
} In the time of Sardanapalus.

BABYLON was an Assyrian province. Edom, Phœnicia, and all Palestine, except Judæa, for a time, subject to Assyria. Egypt prostrate before Assyria, which ruled all Western Asia besides.

AT the opening of Hezekiah's reign of twenty-nine years, Judah had been weak, distracted, and sinking. An unwise alliance with Assyria, the most dangerous of enemies, against Syria and the Northern Kingdom, had involved Jerusalem in the political entanglements of Western Asia.

Faith in Jehovah had decayed ; Assyrian idolatry, favoured by Ahaz, to flatter the Great King and secure the favour of his powerful gods, had been introduced with great splendour in Jerusalem—and the immorality of heathenism, as a necessary result, had poisoned the springs of public, social, and private life. When the good king lay dead, a generation later, amidst the wail of his people, everything was changed for the better. Encouraged and guided by Isaiah and other prophets, he had maintained the throne amidst the most threatening convulsions. He had restored the theocratic principle and acted loyally by it ; had banished idolatry, at least in its public manifestations ; restored the services of the temple ; reorganized its priesthood, provided for their support, and re-established the Passover feast as the great religious festival of the nation. In his early reign he had seen the fall of Samaria, and the successive deportations of the Ten Tribes to Assyria ; but his own kingdom, though far weaker, had weathered the storm of those years. The Philistines had been driven back in the Maritime Plain, and their territory re-annexed to Judah ; the tribute paid to Assyria by Ahaz had been discontinued without evil consequences ; the terrors of the Assyrian invasion under Sargon had been surmounted ; the vast army of Sennacherib had melted like snow before the glance of Jehovah, and the ambassadors of his bitter enemy, Merodach Baladan, of Babylon, had been received at Jerusalem. Fidelity to Jehovah—meaning, as it did, uprightness, valour, and lofty convictions—had received its reward in national honour and prosperity.

Unhappily, Hezekiah had no grown-up son to follow him. His deepest regret in his almost fatal illness, fifteen years before his death, had been the want of an heir to whom to

transmit his crown. A son had, however, been born to him three years later, but he was now only a boy of twelve; left at the most impressible age, without a father's counsels, to the baleful influence of the aristocratic heathen party, whom Hezekiah had with difficulty repressed during his reign. Of these, some, who had lived in the reign of Ahaz, cherished its worst traditions, and as a class they eagerly longed to revive them. Heathenism was fashionable, in fact, in high Jerusalem society, and had only been checked and kept under while Hezekiah lived. Like the Romanists in England, under Edward VI., its adherents yielded, even at best, only a sullen acquiescence to a religious reformation they detested, and thwarted it when they could.[1] Everything indicated that a terrible reaction, like that of the Restoration after the puritan strictness of the Commonwealth, would mark the opening of a new reign.

The name Manasseh, borne by Hezekiah's son only, may have been given in the hope that the Northern Kingdom, now left desolate, might be reunited to Judah under him. But this hope was vain. Local Assyrian governors seem to have taken the place of the kings of Israel, but the antipathy of Ephraim to Judah, and the heathenism of what population was left, proved stronger than the attraction of Jerusalem, or the hatred of vassalage to a foreign master.

The queen mother, if we may trust Jewish tradition, was a daughter of the great prophet Isaiah, but according to the more trustworthy statement of Josephus had a less illustrious citizen or noble of Jerusalem as father.[2] Her name, whether given at her marriage or earlier, wakes a thought of old-world tenderness and poetry, for to Hezekiah, at

[1] Isa. i. 29; ii. 20; lxv. 3. 2 Chron. xxiv. 17, 18. Jer. viii. 1, 2.
[2] *Ant.*, X. iii. 1.

least, she was Hephzibah—"my delight is in her." Was it to the glory of her marriage ceremony that Isaiah refers when he speaks of "the bridegroom putting on his priestly crown,[1] and the bride adorning herself with her jewels,"[2] and was it a fond reminiscence of one he had loved and respected, when he tells us in one of his last chapters, that Jehovah will make Zion, after her long desolation, once more His Hephzibah?[3]

Manasseh was the thirteenth king in descent from David, and, boy as he was at his father's death, seems to have reigned, at least nominally, without a regency, from the first. His mother may have been the real sovereign for a time, as often happens in similar cases in the East, but the friends and counsellors of his father were early removed or put to death, under the influence of the heathen court circle;[4] for the upper class in Judah had always favoured foreign alliances and the toleration of foreign worship.[5] Under their tutelage the reign of Hezekiah was treated as an odious interruption of the national life, to be utterly ignored. Manasseh's rule was to be a continuation of that of Ahaz, both in religion and public polity. The result might have been foreseen. Extending through fifty-four years, and thus the longest in the history of Judah, it formed so dark a blot on the national annals that it is almost passed over in silence by the chroniclers of the time. Men re-

[1] So, literally, the phrase in A. V., "decketh himself with ornaments." Some such custom seems alluded to as still prevails in northern Europe, where the bride wears a crown on her marriage day. The bridegroom in Israel was "crowned on the day of his espousals." Cant. iii. 11. The Hebrew phrase is literally "to make priestly the turban, or head-dress." [2] Isa. lxi. 10.

[3] Isa. lxii. 4. An undesigned coincidence like this is very striking, for the word Hephzibah occurs only in this passage, except where used, in 2 Kings xxi. 1, of Manasseh's mother. Does this not seem to speak for the later chapters, as well as the earlier, being by Isaiah?

[4] Zeph. i. 5-9; iii. 3, 4. [5] 2 Chron. xxiv. 18.

garded it as a period which it was desirable to bury as far as possible in oblivion.

The destruction of the high places by Hezekiah; the overthrow of the idolatry so widely spread in the former reign; and, not least, the long continuance of court favour to the friends of Jehovah-worship, had infuriated the heathen party to the uttermost. Their national religion seemed a barbarous eccentricity, degrading them in the eyes of the great world, and isolating them from the nations around. Idolatry had the prestige of splendid success, for had not the gods of Assyria raised the Great King to the most dazzling glory? In that splendour they too, like others, would like to bask, by introducing Assyrian manners and worship. Nineveh was to Western Asia what the Paris of Louis Fourteenth was to Europe. Not to imitate it was to be provincial and vulgar. The prophets had denounced this apostasy in the past, and brought about harsh restrictions on its supporters; they and their followers would now have to suffer in turn. Ahaz had conceded a contemptuous toleration to Jehovah-worship; now, it would be suppressed. The prophets were dangerous to the aristocracy, from their hold on the people; they would be put out of the way.

The priests had been accused, even by Isaiah, of being, in many cases, drunken and profligate.[1] What value was there in new moons, and Sabbaths, and periodical feasts, kept by such men; or what better were sacrifices offered by them, than similar rites performed by the priests of other gods? He had spoken of them contemptuously, as "greedy dogs which could never have enough," and as looking only for their own gains.[2] Micah had said that they taught for hire,

[1] Isa. xxviii. 7; lvi. 12. [2] Isa. lvi. 11.

and that the prophets divined for money.[1] The old times of Ahaz were better!

Even under the despotism of an Eastern king, however, no course of public action can be vigorously carried out unless largely supported by public opinion. Unhappily, the earnest supporters of the old national faith were only a small minority. The reforms of the past had been mainly external. The community at large could still be spoken of as a "seed of evil doers, laden with iniquity," and Jerusalem could be compared to Sodom and Gomorrah.[2] All through Hezekiah's reign, in spite of outward conformity to Jehovah-worship, many had continued their heathen practices. Idols of gold and silver glittered under trees, in gardens sacred to Baal and Ashtaroth; sacrifices were offered secretly, on the house roofs, to the star-gods of Assyria; incense rose to them from illegal altars of brick; men haunted graves and tombs by night, for dark consultation with the dead, through necromancers;[3] swine and other unclean beasts were offered in sacrifice, as in Egypt, and feasts held on their flesh. Worse than all, those who thus followed heathenism affected moral superiority to the worshippers of Jehovah.[4] It needed only a hint from those in authority to raise the multitude against the partisans of the old national faith.

The flattering embassy of Merodach Baladan to Hezekiah, years before, may have tended to encourage this revival of Asiatic heathenism. Babylon had, indeed, for the time been crushed by Sennacherib, but the visit of its representatives had shewn that Judah was thought, by outside nations, an ally worth having. In those ages, however, alliance with any state implied, as a rule, more or less complete recogni-

[1] Mic. iii. 11.
[2] Isa. i. 4, 10.
[3] From *necros*, dead, and *manteia*, a prophesying. *Gr.*
[4] Isa. i. 29; ii. 20; lxv. 3, 4.

tion of its gods,[1] an idea which, in part, explains the idol high places built by Solomon at Jerusalem, and the Baal temple of Ahab at Samaria. Nor had the lofty conception revealed at Sinai,[2] of a Spiritual Being who could have no similitude, been as yet brought home to the popular mind. Surrounded by nations worshipping idols, men were not able, as a rule, to rise above universally prevailing ideas, and heartily accept a religion without images or other symbols of the Divinity. Nor can we wonder at this, when we find such helps to devotion still so largely used in the Church of Rome, and sacred pictures reverenced in the Greek communion. The emptiness of the Holy of Holies at Jerusalem, which, centuries later, excited the wonder of Pompey, was to become the boast and glory of the Jew, only after a long and deadly struggle, in Jerusalem itself, against the heathen bias of human nature.

How soon the reaction began is not told, but it was terrible when it came. The high places, thrown down by Hezekiah, were rebuilt on the hill-tops and elsewhere, for the different forms of Baal idolatry, and lewd Asherahs were raised beside them. But this was not enough. Ahaz had introduced, for the first time in the history of Israel, the Assyrian worship of "all the host of heaven"—that is, of the five planets—and it was now restored. The sun and moon had hitherto been worshipped as Baal and Astarte—the representatives of the male and female principles in nature. Now, however, a purely, sidereal worship was added. The stars received adoration as the directing and controlling powers in human affairs, and, with the sun and moon, the rulers of the universe. Ages before, this worship, then

[1] This did not apply to David's relations to Tyre.
[2] Exod. xx. 3.

common among the Arabs, had been forbidden,[1] though as yet comparatively pure, but the prohibition had hitherto been unheeded. The small altars which Ahaz had built for star-worship on the roof of his palace, were set up again, and others of a larger size, with an eastern aspect,[2] raised for Baal and Astarte, not only in the men's court in the temple, but also in that of the priests, which was specially set apart for the worship of Jehovah. Other altars, besides, defiled the sacred building, and, above all, a graven image of Astarte, and a huge Asherah, were set up under the shade of the trees in the outer courts. The lewd worship associated with these symbols was also established in the temple; the degraded women and mutilated men who took part in it being lodged in the chambers that lined the outer court. By night the holy enclosures resounded with the orgies of the most degraded of all forms of religion; by day the women wove hangings for the Asherah, and tent covers for the obscene uses of its worship.[3] To make room for the image of Astarte and the heathen altars in the temple, the altar of Jehovah was cast out of the priests' court, and the Ark from the Holy of Holies,[4] though it was not actually destroyed.[5] Some of the store chambers in the temple enclosure, moreover, were appropriated as stables for sacred white horses dedicated to the sun, and for the chariots drawn by them in the great processions at the festivals of the god.[6] All the superstitions connected with Tyrian or

[1] Deut. iv. 19; xvii. 3. These verses have been wrongly held to shew the late origin of Deuteronomy. But see Winer, *Sternkunde;* Herzog, *Zabier*, vol. xviii. p. 343; Chwolsohn, *Die Ssabier*, etc., vol. ii. pp. 21, 173, 611.

[2] Ezek. viii. 16. 2 Kings xxi. 4; xxiii. 12. Jer. vii. 30.

[3] 2 Kings xxi. 3, 7; xxiii. 7. [4] 2 Chron. xxxiii. 16.

[5] Jer. iii. 16. 2 Chron. xxxv. 3. Rosenmüller, *A. und N. Morgenland*, vol. iii. p. 247. But see, afterwards, under Josiah.

[6] Most ancient nations thought of the sun as a flaming chariot drawn by the finest and swiftest horses. The ancient Persians spoke of it as drawn by four, and hence

Assyrian worship flourished apace. Nor were these enough. The craving for "wisdom," which had continued since Solomon's day, had taken the morbid direction of a desire to learn the secrets of noted foreign religions. Envoys were therefore sent to distant lands, to bring back, if possible, new oracles, and open new avenues of intercourse with the unseen.[1] The simplicity of the old national faith had little to feed diseased curiosity. Star-worship brought with it a wide sweep of pretended science and insight into the future. Soothsayers and diviners flourished; wizards and necromancers, affecting to consult the dead, abounded.[2] The hideous image of Moloch, the god of the Ammonites, once more rose in the Valley of Hinnom, and Manasseh himself led the way in consecrating his own children, not to Jehovah,

The Goddess Istar, or Astarte, or Ashtoreth.[2]

consecrated and sacrificed horses to it. Xenophon saw a procession in which were these animals, to be thus offered. *Cyrop.*, viii. 3-6. Even the barbarous Massagetæ had this custom. Herod., i. 216. The Romans had a sun chariot drawn by four horses, of colours chosen to represent the four seasons. Indian mythology has the same idea. The Rabbis say that Manasseh's sun chariot was driven out each morning, the king himself in it, from the east door of the temple, to the top of Mount Olivet, to worship the sun at its rising. See Rosenmüller, *A. und N. Morgenland*, vol. iii. p. 249.

[1] Ewald, vol. iii. p. 717. Isa. lvii. 5-10. Jer. ii. 10-13, 23-28.

[2] The lion on which she stands symbolizes the wild power of nature controlled by her. Over her head is a circle (the moon?) enclosing a star (Venus). Horns rise from the side of the head, perhaps to symbolize those of the moon, or, as Merx thinks, a relic of the goddess having been originally worshipped as a cow.

[3] 2 Kings xxi. 3-7. 2 Chron. xxxiii. 3-7.

but to the grisly idol,[1] or, as the phrase ran, making them pass through the fire to the god; as if the flames, burning away the impure earthly body, let the freed soul pass through them, cleansed from all taint of earth,[2] to unite with the godhead.[3] Ahaz had done the same, and the peo-

[1] 2 Chron. xxxiii. 6.

[2] Mövers, *Rel. d. Phön.*, vol. i. p. 329.

[3] A curious illustration of the vitality of all superstitions is given by Maimonides (A.D. 1135-1204), who himself saw Egyptian nurses passing infants over fire, to preserve them from misfortune. Very recently, moreover, the magistrate of North Arcot addressed a strong appeal to the government of Madras, in favour of prohibiting the ancient religious rite of "passing through the fire," in consequence of the number of deaths which have been caused by its observance. He states that, notwithstanding the progress of education, and the diffusion of enlightenment, the practice is still in vogue. The Governor of Madras, however, does not consider the question as one in which the interference of the government would have a good result, and points out that the practice complained of is somewhat similar to that of leaping through the fires of St. John, which existed till our own days in Bohemia, and which it took centuries of civilization to eradicate.

Sir John Sinclair, in the statistical account of Scotland, tells us that the wide diffusion of the worship of Baal is shewn by customs which have lingered almost to our own day in Ireland, Wales, and the Highlands of Scotland. Two days in the year—the 1st of May and the 31st October—the spring and the autumn equinoxes, were marked by rites in which fire played a prominent part. In the Highlands of Scotland, so lately as the beginning of this century, on the 1st of May, called Beltane day—which by a popular error was understood to mean "the day of Baal's fire"—the boys of the towns assembled on a moor or open space, and made a round table of the green sod—the counterpart of an ancient altar—by digging a circular trench, and forming the earth thus obtained into a flat heap in the centre. A fire was then kindled near, and on this a custard was prepared, of eggs and milk, and also a cake of oatmeal, which was baked on a stone. After eating the custard, the cake was divided into equal portions, according to the number of the persons present. One of the pieces, however, was daubed with charcoal until perfectly black. All were presently put into a bonnet, from which each boy, after being blindfolded, drew one—the last falling to the share of him who held the bonnet. Whoever drew the black piece was regarded as marked out to be sacrificed to Baal, that the Sun god might be propitious in the season just opening, and multiply the fruits of the earth. The devoted boy was not put to death, however, but was required to leap three times through the fire. Baal in Gaelic means a globe; that is, the sun. In Perthshire there is a village called Tillie-beltane, which is associated in the popular mind, though without ground so far as the name goes, with sun-worship, as "the hill of the fire of Baal." Near it are the remains of a Druidical temple, and also a well. On the 1st of May a procession used to be formed, the members of which drank water from the well, and then marched nine times round it and the temple—doubtless the traditional equivalent of the circling dances of Baal worship, round the holy well, the altar, and the temple.

At a late meeting of the Scottish Antiquarian Society in Edinburgh, the Rev. Dr. Stewart, of Nether Lochaber, read a paper on fire superstitions, in which he men-

ple had largely followed the royal example;[1] nor can we doubt that Manasseh would find many to imitate him also. Human sacrifice became common at the "high places of Tophet"[2] in the Valley of Hinnom; the stately central mound, on which the idol towered aloft, rising "deep and large"[3] in the midst. Night seems to have been the special time for these awful immolations. The yells of the children bound to the altars, or rolling into the fire from the brazen arms of the idol; the shouts and hymns of the frantic crowds, and the wild tumult of drums and shrill instruments, by which the cries of the victims were sought to be drowned, rose in awful discordance over the city,[4] forming, with the whole scene, visible from the walls by the glow of the furnaces and flames, such an ideal of trans-

tioned that a correspondent, while in a remote glen in Wigtonshire, last March, saw a slight smoke proceeding from a hollow. On advancing to the bank above, he saw five women passing a sick child through a fire. Two of the women, standing opposite each other, held a blazing hoop vertically between them, and two others, standing on either side of the hoop, were engaged in passing the child backwards and forwards through the opening of the hoop. The fifth woman, who was the mother of the child, stood at a little distance, earnestly looking on. After the child had been eighteen times passed and repassed through the fiery circle, it was returned to its mother, and the burning hoop was thrown into a pool of water close by. The child was about eighteen months, was a weakling, and was supposed to have come under the baleful influence of the evil eye. The hoop had been twisted round with a straw rope, in which a few drops of oil were scattered to make it burn all round at the same time. The child was passed through the hoop eighteen times, once for each month of its age. When the baby was taken home a bunch of bog myrtle was suspended over its bed.

One of the deities partially absorbed by the Sun-god was the ancient god of *fire*. Among most primitive peoples fire is endowed with divine attributes; it moves and devours like a living thing; it purifies and burns up all that is foul; and it is through the fire upon the altar, that the savour of the burnt sacrifice ascends to the gods in heaven. But fire is also a messenger from above. It comes to us from the sky in the lightning-flash, and we feel it in the rays of the noontide sun. The Fire-god tended, therefore, to become, on the one side, the messenger and intermediary between gods and men, and on the other side, the Sun-god himself. Fire was produced in Babylonia as in other countries of the ancient world, by rubbing two sticks one against the other.

[1] 2 Kings xvi. 3; xvii. 17.

[2] Jer. vii. 31, 32. Ezek. xxiii. 37, 39. 2 Kings xxiii. 10.

[3] Isa. xxx. 33.

[4] See vol. iii. p. 400.

cendent horror, that the name of the valley became, and still continues, in the form of Gehenna, the usual word for hell.[1]

It was an organized attempt to win over the people as a whole to idolatry, and it succeeded only too well. The sacred books were so systematically destroyed that men listened to the Law, fifty years later, as to a newly discovered treasure. The name of God was erased wherever it was found.[2] The Sabbath was disregarded.[3] To swear by Moloch became a common oath.[4] Fresh altars rose in the gardens round Jerusalem and on the flat roofs of the houses.[5] Black-robed priests of Baal took the place of the white-robed priests of Jehovah.[6] Star-worship became so popular that, a hundred years later, it was still followed. In Jeremiah's time, in the generation after Manasseh, the worship of the planet Venus, the queen of heaven, was general. The children gathered wood, the fathers kindled the fire on the altars, and the women kneaded sacred cakes, to offer in her honour.[7] Clouds of incense to a mob of idols were continually rising from public and private altars. Every religion was tolerated but that of Jehovah.

It was only to be anticipated that the mass of the people, gross and indifferent on religious matters as the multitude always is, would readily follow any new movement, recommended at once by the patronage of the great, and by the

[1] Gehinnom was the place in which the refuse of the temple sacrifices and the offal of the city were burned, and the fire, never extinguished, added to the appropriateness of the name as a symbol of the pit. The Burning Ghaut on the Hooghly, near Calcutta, shews a somewhat similar spectacle in our own day. The bodies of the dead are often imperfectly burned, and with the constant smouldering fire, the black smoke, the foul stench, and the crowd of vultures perched around, help us to realize Gehinnom.

[2] Patrick. [3] Isa. lvi. 2; lviii. 13. [4] Zeph. i. 5.

[5] Isa. lxv. 3, 11. Jer. viii. 2; xix. 13; xxxii. 29. Zeph. i. 5.

[6] Ezek. xliv. 7; viii. 16; xlviii. 11. Zeph. i. 4. [7] Jer. vii. 17, 18.

escape it offered from the severe morals enforced by the prophets. But, unfortunately, even those who might have been expected to withstand the inroad of corruption, very generally gave way before it. Among the prophets only a few stood faithful to Jehovah; the majority either held their peace, or degraded their office for the basest ends. A terrible picture of their moral lapse has been left by their brethren who remained true to the old religion. They were "blind watch-dogs, that did not bark, but lay idly sleeping; insatiably greedy; set on gain; given up to strong drink." They were "light and treacherous." They affected to believe in idols. God had withdrawn His word from them. They had sunk in fact to the level of heathen diviners, and were mere deceivers of the people.[1] Numbers of the priests went over to the service of heathen altars.[2] The grossest immorality was common to many of them and of the prophets.[3] They polluted the sanctuary and openly violated the Law.[4] Nor were the laity behind their spiritual guides. The nobles were "roaring lions;" the judges,[5] "ravening wolves." They "set snares for men as fowlers do for birds."[6] They "hated the good and loved the evil;" they "abhorred justice and perverted equity."[7] They "devoured men more righteous than themselves."[8] Private virtue and truth seemed to have vanished. Men swore indifferently and with equal insincerity by Jehovah and by Moloch.[9] The godly had perished from the land; the honest from among men. Every one "did evil with both hands." Even the friend could not be trusted; a wife

[1] Isa. lvi. 9–12. Zeph. iii. 4. Jer. ii. 26; v. 13; xxvii. 9; xxix. 8, 9; xxiii. 16, 31.
[2] Jer. vi. 13–15; viii. 10–12.
[3] Jer. xxiii. 9–11, 14.
[4] Zeph. iii. 4.
[5] Zeph. i. 8.
[6] Jer. v. 26.
[7] Mic. iii. 2–9.
[8] Hab. i. 13.
[9] Zeph. i. 5.

was ready to betray her husband. The son dishonoured the father; the daughter rose against her mother; a man found his worst enemies in his own household.[1] An absorbing passion for gain possessed all classes.[2]

Yet there were not wanting some Abdiels, faithful among the faithless. Taking their lives in their hands, men like Isaiah and Micah boldly denounced the conduct of Manasseh, in re-introducing idolatry, with all its inherent abominations.[3] Evil, they cried, which would make men's ears tingle, was preparing for Jerusalem and Judah, for their sin. Jehovah would destroy the holy city as He had destroyed Samaria, and root out its inhabitants as He had rooted out the House of Ahab. He would wipe Jerusalem clean of them as a man wipes out a dish, turning it upside down as he does so. They should become a spoil and prey to their enemies.[4] The great prophetic oration in the twenty-fourth to the twenty-seventh of Isaiah accords so well with these denunciations that it may best be referred to this period.[5] It runs thus:

"XXIV. 1. Behold,[6] Jehovah will make the land empty and waste, and turn it upside down,[7] and scatter abroad its inhabitants. 2. It will be the same with the priest as with the people; with the master as with the servant; with the mistress as with the maid; with the seller

[1] Mic. vii. 1–6. [2] Zeph. i. 18.

[3] A very ancient Jewish tradition speaks of Isaiah as still living in the earlier years of the son of Hezekiah, and the closing date of Micah's activity is so uncertain that, notwithstanding the opinion of some that, like Hosea, they both died before the close of Hezekiah's reign, there is more probability, as I think, that they outlived him.

[4] 2 Kings xxi. 12, 13.

[5] I am aware that chapters xxiv. xxvii. are attributed by some to a later prophet, but since there are many who, on the other hand, ascribe them to Isaiah, the point must be held as at least unsettled. (Dillmann's *Knobel's Iesaia*, p. 206.) Some, in the same way, translate the different verbs in the first part as in the present tense; others, of equal authority, as in the future, which seems to me to suit the text better.

[6] Isa. xxiv. 1–23. [7] See 2 Kings xxi. 12, 13, as quoted above.

as with the buyer; with the borrower as with the lender; with the debtor as with the creditor. 3. The land will be utterly emptied and utterly plundered. For Jehovah has spoken this word.

"4. The land (thus laid waste) will be sad and will fade away (as a withered plant); its whole sweep[1] will fade away; the great ones of the land will lament.

"5. For it is become defiled under its inhabitants; because they have transgressed the laws, violated the commandment; broken the everlasting covenant. 6. Therefore a curse has devoured the land, and the people are punished (for their guilt); therefore the inhabitants are burnt (up by God's judgments), and only a few are left.

"7. The grapes shrivel; the vine fades; all the merry-hearted sigh. 8. The glad sound of timbrels is still; the noise of them that rejoice is hushed; the joy of the lyre is silent. 9. Men shall no longer drink wine amidst singing; strong drink[2] will be bitter to them who take it. 10. The city is a solitude;[3] it is broken down; the wrecked houses are closed by mounds of ruin, so that no one can enter them! 11. In the fields, men lament aloud for the desolate vineyards; all gladness has darkened to night; the mirth of the land is gone. 12. What remains of the city is desolation; the town gate is broken down into ruins.

"13. For it shall be in the land, in the midst of the nations, as at the beating down (of the fruit) of the olive, and as at the grape gleaning when the vintage is over! (Hardly any will be left.) 14. The few who escape will lift up their voice (rejoicing) and cry aloud—'Sing praise from the lands of the western sea to the Majesty of Jehovah (who has enabled us to reach them): 15. exalt Jehovah in the lands of the sun, (the east and southern countries:) the name of Jehovah, the God of Israel, in the isles of the west!' 16. From (those fugitives, at) the opposite ends of the earth, have we heard (these) songs of praise to the Righteous One[4] (these anticipations of victory to His people)."[5]

The prophet cannot, however, share in their joyful expectations; he sees destruction before his nation.

"But as for me, I can only say, Misery, misery is before me! Woe is me! The plunderers plunder; the plunderers plunder remorselessly.

[1] Literally, "the world," tābāl, a poetical word. It is here the whole Jewish world. It is used of the kingdom of Babylon in Isa. xiii. 11. Comp. orbis Romanus.

[2] Shākar = strong (intoxicating) drink of any kind.

[3] Same word as in Gen. i. 1 (tohu) = "without form," reduced to chaos.

[4] Knobel. Diestel.

[5] Ewald.

17. Terror, and a prison pit, and the snare, are upon thee, O inhabitant of the land! 18. And whoso flees from the noise of the terrible foe shall fall into the pit, and he who escapes from the pit shall be caught in the snare; for the windows of heaven shall be opened, and the pillars on which the earth rests shall shake. 19. The kingdom [1] heaves, shakes, totters; it is utterly broken up; it is utterly shattered: it shakes to its centre; it staggers like a drunken man; it sways to and fro like a swinging hammock; for its sin lies heavy upon it; it falls, and shall rise no more."

The enemies of Israel overthrown, her restoration opens to the eyes of the prophet. He sees the destruction of the enemy by whom Judah has been crushed, and the return of her sons from captivity. This is, therefore, a prediction of the fate of Babylon, which had not as yet even risen to be a kingdom.

"21. In that day Jehovah shall visit (in wrath) the host of the powers of the air [2] (the prompters of men to evil), and also the kings of the earth (here below). 22. They shall be thrust into the prison-pit, like captives after battle, and shut up in the dungeon, and set free only after long years. 23. And then shall the moon grow pale, and the sun's splendour faint; for Jehovah of Hosts shall again reign in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, with overpowering glory; surrounded by the heads of the nation (and Him—not the sun or moon, or host of heaven, as now—will the people worship)."

The old theocracy thus set up once more; the oppressor destroyed, and the nation brought back to its own land triumphantly; a song of praise to God will rise from Mount Zion.

"XXV. 1. O Jehovah, Thou art my God! [3] I will exalt Thee; I will praise Thy name! For Thou hast done wonderful things: Thou hast

[1] Eichhorn. I have preferred this reading as the only one to which the words immediately following could be justly applied. Most translators use the word "earth," but the earth cannot "fall," etc., except in imaginative application to the terrors of the last judgment. The whole prophecy is, however, highly figurative.

[2] Eph. iii. 10; vi. 12. [3] Isa. xxv. 1-12.

fulfilled Thine ancient purposes with faithfulness and truth. 2. For Thou hast turned (Babylon[1] from) a great city into a ruined heap; the strong city into mounds of wreck; the palace city of the barbarians to be no city any longer;—it shall never be rebuilt! 3. For this shall fierce peoples glorify Thee; the towns of warlike nations shall honour Thee. 4. For Thou hast proved Thyself a strong defence to the weak; a strong defence to the needy in his distress; a cover from the storm; a shade from the heat, when the raging of the terrible ones was like that of a tempest against a wall. 5. Thou hast abated the stormy triumphing of the alien, as Thou dost the heat of the waterless desert, when Thou veilest it with clouds. (As the heat is subdued by the shadow of clouds,[2]) the exulting triumph-shouts of the terrible ones have been brought low.

"6. And, now, in this mountain (the hill of Zion) shall Jehovah of Hosts make to all peoples a feast of fat things; a (covenant) feast on (peace offerings, with) wine, (left till now) on the lees, till it has become strong and bright; a feast of fat pieces, full of marrow; of strong wine, well strained! 7. And He will destroy in this mountain the veil (of mourning) which has shrouded the faces of all peoples; the covering that has been spread over (the heads of) all nations.[3] 8. He will destroy death for ever, and the Lord Jehovah will wipe away tears from off all faces, and the reproach His people have borne will He take away from off the whole earth. Jehovah has spoken it.

"9. And it shall be said in that day, 'See, this is our God; we have hoped in Him that He would save us; this is Jehovah, for whom we waited: let us exult and be glad in His salvation.'

"10. For the hand of Jehovah shall rest on this mountain, to protect His people, and Moab—(so call we our enemies as a whole)—shall be trampled under foot, even as crushed straw is trodden down in Madmenah, (in the Moabite land). 11. And Jehovah shall stretch forth His arms in the midst of Mount Zion, as a swimmer stretcheth them forth to swim, and he will humble their pride, together with the plots of their hands.[4] 12. And the high-towering walls of Kir-Moab will He throw down, lay low, and level with the dust."

[1] This is clearly the reference, though perhaps the prophet did not know the particular enemy by whom God would punish his people. Yet Babylon did not become independent, or begin its career of empire, till B.C. 625; long after Isaiah's death.

[2] Furrer, p. 105. *Land and Book*, p. 537.

[3] Primarily the Babylonian tyranny; but, also, in the end, the spiritual sorrows of mankind.

[4] Every one in the East uses "hand over hand" swimming, raising each hand alternately as high as he can, and bringing it down on the water with sounding force.

Another song of triumph, which will be sung in the land of Judah on that day, is now heard.

"XXVI. 1. We have a strong city;[1] the saving help of our God is our defence, instead of walls and ditches. 2. Open ye the gates, that a righteous nation, the nation that keeps the truth (now freed from its oppressors) may enter in.[2] 3. (It has well been said,[3]) 'The heart that is constant, Thou keepest in perfect peace, for on Thee does it trust!' 4. Trust ye in Jehovah for ever, for in Jehovah Jah ye have an everlasting Rock. 5. For He has brought low them that dwelt on high; the lofty city, (Babylon,) He brought it low, cast it down to the earth, hurled it to the dust. 6. The foot trod it down, the foot of the poor, the feet of the oppressed. 7. The path in which the righteous walk is smooth: Thou, Thyself, makest smooth the path of the just! 8. Yea, in the path of Thy judgments have we waited for Thee, O Jehovah; the desire of our soul is towards Thy name, and the remembrance of Thee. 9. With my soul have I longed for Thee in the night; with my spirit within me I sought Thee earnestly; for when Thy judgments smite the earth, its inhabitants learn righteousness. 10. If grace be shewn to the wicked he does not learn righteousness; even in a land where justice and right prevail, he will act unjustly, and has no eye for the Majesty of Jehovah. 11. Jehovah, when Thine arm was lifted up, they would not see it; but they shall see, with shame, Thy zeal for Thy people; for fire will devour these, Thine adversaries. 12. Jehovah will secure peace for us; for it is Thou who hast done all the work (of our deliverance) for us! 13. O Jehovah, our God, other lords besides Thee—(even the fierce Chaldæan oppressors)—have had dominion over us, but, through Thy doings, we (are now free, and) praise Thy name!"

The prophet next sees in the distant future the sad condition of the exiles when they return. The nation seems as if it were dead. But Jehovah will raise it, and fill the land with men.

"14. The dead live no more; the shades rise not again; that it might be so, Thou hast visited and destroyed them, and made their

Most translators render the phrase, "as crushed straw," by "is trodden down in the dung pool;" but there are no dung pools in the East. Madmenah was a place in Moab famed for its harvests. Neil's *Palestine*, p. 241.

[1] Isa. xxvi. 1-21. [2] The Jews returning from exile. [3] Ps. cxii. 7.

very memory to perish. 15. But Thou hast increased Thy people, O Jehovah; Thou hast increased the nation; Thou hast won for Thyself glory; Thou hast made wide the boundaries of the land. 16. Jehovah, in their affliction they sought Thee; they poured out their prayer when Thy chastisements were upon them. 17. As a woman with child, when her delivery is near, is in pain and cries out, so were we before Thee, O Jehovah. 18. We bore pains great as those of the travailing woman (in our flight from Babylon, and in our sufferings there). But (while the woman rejoices in the birth of a living child) all our anguish has brought us nothing as yet (for our condition is wretched); the land lies waste; its inhabitants fallen![1] 19. O that thy dead could live again (my country)! O that thy dead bodies could arise! Awake and sing, ye dwellers in the dust of the grave! For thy dew—(the favour of Jehovah)—gives life, and (through its mighty power) the earth shall bring to life the shades!

"20. Go, my people, into thy chambers, and shut thy door behind thee. Hide thee for a short moment, till the judgment of wrath has passed by. 21. For, behold, Jehovah cometh out of His place (in heaven), to visit the guilt of the inhabitants of the earth upon them; the blood of the slain (of our people) shall not be hidden (in the ground); the earth shall disclose it, (that it may cry for revenge); she will not hide the slain in her bosom (but send them forth from their graves, to be accusers before God, demanding wrath on the Chaldæans, their murderers)!

"XXVII. 1. In that day[2] will Jehovah visit Leviathan—the swift gliding serpent—Leviathan, the coiled-up serpent, and shall slay the dragon that is in the sea.[3] 2. In that day (when this great world-

[1] A paraphrase which seems to me to embody the sense.

[2] Isa. xxvii. 1-13.

[3] Knobel, Diestel, and others, think the epithets in this verse refer only to Babylon. Delitzsch and others suppose Assyria, Babylon, and Egypt meant. Cheyne, and still others, fancy that all the enemies of God's people are intended. Leviathan is a Hebrew word, and occurs five times in the Bible: Job iii. 8, rendered "their mourning;" xli. 1 (xl. 25) = the crocodile; Ps. lxxiv. 14 = the princes of Pharaoh, the great crocodile, or "dragon that lieth in the midst of the rivers;" Ezek. xxix. 3; Ps. civ. 26; it is some kind of whale, or sea monster. In the text the Chaldee paraphrase refers the two words to Pharaoh and to Sennacherib, respectively. It seems probable that "Leviathan" is equivalent to our "monster," and may have included gigantic serpents, such as the python, which was worshipped by the Egyptians. The Rabbis say that God created Leviathan male and female on the fifth day, but presently killed the female, and having salted it, laid it up, to be feasted on at the coming of the Messiah. A tabernacle for the righteous is then to be made of its skin, which will shine from one end of the earth to the other, etc. (Isa. lx. 3). Buxtorff, *Heb. and Ch. Lex.*, p. 1128. Hershom, *Treas. of Talmud*, p. 203.

The word "dragon"—tannin—seems to mean any great monster, whether of the

judgment shall have been accomplished), sing ye songs of praise respecting Zion, the beloved vineyard, thus: 3. 'I, Jehovah, am its Keeper; moment by moment do I water it; that nothing hurt it, I watch it night and day. 4. My wrath (against it) has passed away; should I meet foes, thick and close as thorns and thistles, invading it, I would march against them in war, and burn them up together. 5. But if they sought My protection (and made Me their God), desiring to be at peace with Me (and My people), then would I allow them to make such peace with Me.'"

This care of Jehovah will have glorious results.

"6. In future times shall Jacob take root in the land:[1] Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the whole face of the land with fruit."

The chastisement with which God has visited His people, compared with that inflicted on their enemies, is a proof of His gracious designs.

"7. Hath He smitten him (Judah) as He smote his smiter?[2] Or has he been slain as those who slew him are slain? (*He* has been visited only with disquiet and exile.) 8. With just measure (of penalty) Thou didst contend with him, when Thou drovest him out of the land, as with a fierce blast in the day of storm.[3]

"9. But by this (visitation)[4] shall the guilt of Jacob be purged;[5] for the fruit of the removal of his sin shall be that he shall break down

sea or the land. It is used fourteen times in the Bible. See Gen. i. 21; Job vii. 12. Isa. xxvii. 1, etc. It appears to refer to a great sea monster, such as a whale, shark, or the like. In Exod. vii. 9; Deut. xxxii. 33; Ps. xci. 13, etc., it is a serpent; and in Isa. li. 9; Ezek. xxix. 3; Ps. lxxiv. 13, a crocodile, as emblem of Egypt.

[1] Isa. xxvii. 6. [2] Isa. xxvii. 7, 8.

[3] Literally, east wind. The east and south-east winds come from waterless hot regions, and wither up vegetation. Wanting ozone, they are very enfeebling. The east wind often blows like a glowing furnace blast, for several days consecutively, over Palestine, in May and October. It is the sirocco. When it rises to a storm, it veils the sky in a dusky yellow shroud of sand-clouds, through which the sun shines, pale and shorn of its beams, like a smoking globe of fire. Its whirlwinds raise pillars of sand and dust into the air, which seem at a distance like pillars of smoke. Men flee before it, and hide wherever they can. Furrer, *Bib. Lex.*, vol. v. p. 697.

[4] Isa. xxvii. 9.

[5] The verb Kaphar, here used, is translated in the A.V. "to make an atonement," "to make reconciliation," "to pacify," "to forgive," "to purge away." It means primarily, "to cover."

his (heathen) altars, and shatter all their stones into fragments, small as pieces of crumbled lime, and Asherahs and sun obelisks shall no more rise aloft (in his midst).

"10. For Jerusalem,[1] the strong city, shall be desolate (in the days of your exile): a habitation lonely and forsaken as the wilderness; there shall the calf feed and lie down, browsing on the twigs of the wild bushes (with which the undisturbed soil shall be overgrown).[2] 11. The withered twigs (of the winter) shall be broken off for fuel; women shall come and burn them. For the people have no understanding, and therefore He that made them will not have mercy on them, and He that formed them will shew them no favour.

"12. But after those days[3] (when the time of His pity has come), Jehovah will (have a rich harvest of mercy, and shall) gather Israel from the great river Euphrates to the river of Egypt (the Wady el Arish, as a man beats down and gathers the olives in their season), and ye shall be gathered one by one, ye children of Israel! 13. And on that day shall a great trumpet—(the sign of the return)—be blown, and those that were lost in the land of Assyria, and the banished ones in the land of Egypt, shall come back, and cast themselves down before Jehovah in the holy mountain in Jerusalem."

To this wonderful prophetic picture, the thirty-fifth chapter adds a further vision of the triumphal circumstances of the return from Babylon—the whole couched in the noblest language of poetry.

"XXXV. 1. The wilderness[4] and the sun-scorched land shall rejoice before (the returning exiles): the desert shall be glad and blossom like the rose.[5] 2. It will blossom abundantly and rejoice, breaking out, (as it were,) into joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given it: the leafy splendour of Carmel and Sharon.[6] Men shall see the glory of Jehovah; the majesty of our God!"

The prophet now addresses the exiles directly.

[1] Isa. xxvii. 10, 11.
[2] Furrer, p. 105.
[3] Isa. xxvii. 12, 13.
[4] Isa. xxxv. 1–10.
[5] Tristram, *Nat. Hist. of Bible*, p. 476, thinks the sweet-scented narcissus is meant. So Houghton. Layard repeatedly speaks of the short-lived splendour of colour into which the Mesopotamian desert bursts after the spring rains.
[6] *Land and Book*, p. 112.

"3. Strengthen the hands[1] that hang down (discouraged and irresolute); straighten up the tottering knees! 4. Say to the faint-hearted, 'Be strong! fear not. See, your God comes to avenge you, to give you a god-like recompense! He Himself comes to save you!'

"5. In that day,[2] the eyes of the blind shall be opened; the ears of the deaf unstopped. 6. The lame will leap like a deer; the tongue of the dumb will sing. For flowing waters shall break out, before them, in the wilderness, and brooks in the desert. 7. And the deceitful mirage will become a real lake,[3] and the thirsty land springs of water; in the couching place of jackals shall spring up grass, and the reeds and rushes, (that mark living streams). 8. And a raised and made way will stretch before them: it will be called "The holy way;" it shall be trodden by no unclean person, but shall be only for the clean. No one who walks on it, however simple he be, shall wander from it (and lose himself in the wilderness around). 9. No lion shall be there (to molest); no ravening beast shall set foot on it, or be found there: the released exiles alone shall walk on it. And the freed ones of Jehovah shall return, and come to Zion with loud jubilations: everlasting joy (like an unfading crown) shall be on their heads. They shall have joy and gladness, and (the) sorrow and sighing (of exile) shall flee away!"

Words such as these, mingling denunciation of popular sins with gloomy predictions of the overthrow of the state, and the deportation of the citizens and their fellow-countrymen, to a distant land, as slaves and exiles, must have created great excitement in the small community of Jerusalem. Spoken by one like Isaiah, now old and venerable, and by Micah, the living counterpart of the great Elijah—rough clad, austere, alarming—the heathen party now in power would feel them as dangerous politically as they were hateful on other grounds. It must have seemed imperative

[1] Isa. xxxv. 3, 4. [2] Isa. xxxv. 5–10.

[3] "I once gave chase to a herd of antelopes near Aleppo. The day was intensely hot, and the antelopes made direct towards a vast mirage, which covered the whole eastern horizon. They seemed to be literally leaping through the water, and I could see their figure below the surface, and reversed, with the utmost distinctness." *Land and Book*, p. 523. The Arab word for mirage is Serab, and the word in the text is Sarab. Isaiah, therefore, doubtless refers to this deceitful phenomenon. It is a mere optical illusion.

to silence such voices, if the idolatrous reaction were to succeed. It was attempted, therefore, as the first step in persecution, to turn them to ridicule. The scoffers "opened wide their mouths" at them, in scorn and mocking, and even thrust out their tongues at them as they spoke.[1] Ere long harsher measures were used. But, amidst all this social proscription, the faithful among the prophets, and the small but earnest band who followed them, stood firm. Despised and insulted daily, they still boldly pleaded for Jehovah, and denounced the growing abominations and immorality of idolatry. In the midst of a hostile population, they stood forth as confessors of the faith of their fathers. The disciples of Isaiah,[2] who in these evil times "dwelt before Jehovah,"[3] delighting above all things to behold His beauty and to inquire in His temple —the psalmists who, under Hezekiah, had added to the songs of God's people, inspired odes still found in the canon ; the true-hearted men who had, everywhere, through Judah and Israel, collected the ancient sacred books ; the "meek of the land," who sat at the feet of the prophets, and made their instruction the light of their feet and the lamp of their path ; above all, those whom the glowing eloquence of Isaiah and his brethren had kindled to a prophetic enthusiasm for Jehovah, akin to their own—formed a community, small, perhaps, in numbers, but strong in the depth of their convictions and the loftiness of their creed—"the congregation of the saints"[5]—the faithful witnesses for truth upon the earth.

Between these and their fellow-countrymen, the relations grew more and more strained, as corruption and idolatry

[1] Isa. lvii. 4. [2] Isa. viii. 16. [3] Isa. xxiii. 18.
[4] Ps. xxvii. 4. [5] Ps. lxxxix. 16.

spread. Life was daily more bitter for the faithful; social intercourse more interrupted. Parties became more narrowly defined. Existence seemed a burden to the godly. The mockery and roughness of the multitude grew more intense. Everything foreboded the breaking out of an organized persecution, to sweep the last traces of Jehovah-worship from the land.

CHAPTER III.

THE GREAT PERSECUTION.

THE intense mutual hatred of the heathen party and the worshippers of Jehovah had twice before—under Ahab in Israel, and Athaliah in Judah—culminated in open violence, and the friends of the old religion must have felt that under Manasseh, idolatry would, ere long, slake its enmity in their blood. It had too many grudges to repay, to let them hope for quiet toleration. Nor were their gloomy fears unrealized. At a very early period in the new reign, if tradition be correct, the court party, heading the thoughtless and degenerate multitude, grew tired of mere insult and mockery, and demanded blood, and the darkest page in the annals of the nation followed. There had been no such day, since the miseries of their fathers in Egypt under the ancient Pharaohs. Even Athaliah had not dared to close the temple; but it was now defiled by idols and idol altars, so that the godly could no longer enter it. The blood of the saints was shed on every hand. Braving all danger, true prophets like Isaiah, Micah, and Hozai,[1] faithfully did their duty; boldly rebuking even the king, in public, for his apostasy. But their fidelity only roused him to fiercer excesses. Raging like a destroying lion, to use the words of Jeremiah,[2] he put to death the worshippers

[1] 2 Kings xxi. 10. 2 Chron. xxxiii. 18, 19. The word rendered "the seers" is, in Hebrew, Hozai, apparently a proper name. [2] Jer. ii. 30.

of Jehovah, till it seemed to contemporaries as if Jerusalem were a bowl filled to the brim with their blood.[1] If he could silence the prophets and their adherents no other way, he would do so by the sword. Some were killed almost daily.[2] Nobles who took their part were dashed from the rocky cliffs of the city hills.[3] The days of Alva in Holland, or of Charles IX. in France, or of the Covenanters under Charles II., in Scotland, were anticipated in the Jewish capital. The streets were red with blood. Tradition has assigned Isaiah's death to this period. He was now about eighty-six years of age, and, apart from the sanctity of his life and the splendour of his genius, might well have been spared as the honoured friend and counsellor of Hezekiah. But his very age and dignity were against him, making his fiery words still weightier; for he still witnessed openly for Jehovah, fearlessly exposing and denouncing the iniquity of both high and low. An oration, of which part has come down to us, may have been the immediate cause of his final proscription by Manasseh. In this grand indictment, as was natural in a true prophet, the corrupt members of his order, and the apostate priests who had gone over to the service of idols, or were cravenly silent in those evil days, were first assailed:

"LVI. 9. Come hither[4]—he cries—all ye (wild) beasts of the field, and devour (the flock of Jehovah); come, all ye wild beasts of the woods! (It is left defenceless to you!) 10. For its watchmen are blind; they keep no look-out; they are, all of them, dumb dogs; they cannot bark: they are not kozim—true seers—but hozim, mere ravers and dreamers;—lying down, they (care only to) sleep. 11. Yet they are greedy, and can never be satisfied; they crave (money and gifts of all kinds) continually." Shepherds are they that keep no watch over

[1] 2 Kings xxi. 16. [2] Jos., *Ant.*, X. iii. 1. Jer. ii. 30. Neh. ix. 26.
[3] Ewald, quoting Ps. cxli. 6, 7. [4] Isa. lvi. 9–12.
[5] Mic. iii. 5–11. Ezek. xiii. 19; xxii. 25.

the sheep, and know not how to do so. They all turn their own way, each after his own profit,[1] from the highest of them to the lowest. 12. 'Come,' say they (one to the other), 'let us fetch wine, and let us have a carouse on strong drink: and let us do the same to-morrow, and make the day still more jolly.'"

The thought of what was passing around him at the moment now rises in the mind of the prophet; the martyrdoms that were daily taking place.

"LVII. 1. (While faithless men thus not only live, but flourish in their iniquity,) the righteous man perishes[2] (because he is righteous), and no man takes it to heart; godly men are taken away, and no one considers that the righteous are thus let die, to keep them from the evil to come. 2. He passes away into peace: they rest in their quiet beds (in the dust); all who have walked in the ways of God."

Their sufferings and martyr death recall their worth, and the indignities they have suffered, while the contrast rises between them and those by whom they have been hunted to death.

"3. But (as for you),[3] ye sons of the sorceress, ye brood of the adulterer and the harlot, draw near, hither! 4. Of whom do ye thus make sport? At whom do you make mouths, and stick out your tongue?[4] (But are ye yourselves not fitter objects of mockery?) Are ye not children of sin; the spawn of the faithless? 5. Do ye not burn with unholy lust under the terebinths, and under every green tree (of your idol groves)?[5] Do you not sacrifice children (to Moloch and Baal) in (the valley of Hinnom, and in the) dark caves of the rocks, in torrent valleys?[6] 6. Are not your sacred fetish stones[7] in these wadys, smooth

[1] By bribes, gifts, etc., to prophesy falsely.

[2] Isa. lvii. 1, 2.

[3] Isa. lvii. 3–6.

[4] Chap. lxvi. 5; xxxvii. 23. Ps. xxii. 7; xxxv. 21.

[5] Hos. iv. 15. Isa. i. 29. Ezek. vi. 13.

[6] This awful worship was apparently carried out with secret rites, in lonely places, as well as at Hinnom.

[7] In the earliest times such stones had been familiar to the Hebrews (Gen. xxviii. 11, 18), but they had been put to heathen uses in later ages, instead of being dedicated, as at first, to Jehovah. Knobel thinks the reference here is to idols of any kind.

with the oil you pour over them, your "portion"[1] and delight, (instead of Jehovah)?[2] (These, these are your choice!) To them, even to them, do ye pour out drink-offerings, and present meat-offerings. Shall I, says Jehovah, look quietly on at this? 7. On a great and high hill[3] thou (leaving thy Husband,[4] Jehovah) hast set thy bed (to commit impurity in idol worship);[5] thither thou goest up to offer sacrifice. 8. The memorial of thy God—("Jehovah is our God, Jehovah is one"—written on the posts and doors of thy house),[6] thou hast removed behind these posts and doors (that they may not shame thee in thy unfaithfulness;[7] thou hast uncovered thyself and gone up, and made broad thy bed for thy sin, and chosen a paramour from among them.[8] Thou lovest their bed; thou choosest the side of it thou likest for thyself.[9]

"9. (As a harlot goes forth,) anointed with oil[10] and fragrant with costly perfumes, (to seek new lovers), thou hast gone outside thine own land, to Baal, the king[11] (to learn from his foreign temples what thou couldst copy in thine own. Thou hast even sent thy envoys far off to distant countries, to the shrines of remote gods, to bring back their worship). Thou hast, indeed, gone so far as to debase thyself to honour the infernal gods—the gods of Sheol (the abyss beneath the earth).[12]

[1] Jer. x. 16. Ps. xvi. 5; lxxiii. 26; cxix. 57; cxlii. 5.

[2] Jer. x. 16. Deut. iv. 19.

[3] Isa. lxii. 7, 8.

[4] Isa. i. 21. Hos. i.-iii. Ezek. xvi. 23.

[5] The inherent impurity of heathenism is illustrated by the following extract from *Six Years in India* (p. 109), by Mrs. (General) Colin McKenzie: "We passed to day a pretty little girl, singing at the top of her voice, and C. told me that the words of the song were so utterly detestable and vile, that hardly any man among the worst in London would sing them, unless he were drunk. Nothing can equal the abomination of the Hindu deities and their worship. The verses taught to children at school are such as cannot be repeated."

[6] Deut. vi. 9; xi. 20. See page 15.

[7] So Knobel, Diestel, Delitzsch, and others. Cheyne thinks that the view of the Targum and Jerome, by which "memorial" means idol, or obscene idolatrous symbol, is intended.

[8] That is, thou choosest out a special idol, and surrenderest thyself to its lewd worship.

[9] Delitzsch and Cheyne, following Hitzig, Ewald, Umbreit and others, translate this phrase: "Thou lookest at the phallus"—the obscene symbol of Baal worship. But Knobel and Diestel reject this.

[10] Isa. lvii. 9, 10.

[11] Baal was called "King Baal," and "the King of Eternity," etc. Ges., *Monumen. Phœn.*, pp. 197, 202, 205, 284. Möver's *Phönizier*, vol. i. p. 400.

[12] So Knobel, Diestel, and others; Delitzsch and Cheyne, on the other hand, think the reference is to political embassies to the kings of Assyria, Egypt, etc. But this does not seem to me to suit the connection.

"10. Thou hast wearied thyself with the length of these journeys; yet thou hast not said, 'I will go no further, I will give up.' Thy zeal and eagerness have always given thee strength (to complete the long pilgrimage, and) have kept thee from (breaking down or) being discouraged.

"11. Of whom (says Jehovah)[1] hast thou been afraid or alarmed, that thou shouldst have played the traitor (to Me), and not remembered Me, or laid to heart My promise (of being thy protector)? Is it not because I have been long silent (and have let thy sins continue), that thou no longer fearest me? (Thou thinkest I have forsaken thee, but thou doest Me great wrong. 12. But, now,) I will make known thy (fancied) righteousness. Yet, what will it avail; what will thy works profit thee (in which it consists)? 13. When thou criest, let the herd (of thy gods) save thee! But the wind shall sweep them all off: a breath shall carry them away. Yet, he who trusts in Me shall possess this land and inherit My holy mountain!"

The prophet now sees the people in exile, and hears the voice of Jehovah summoning to preparations for their return.

"14. A Voice calls, 'Cast ye up, cast ye up[2] a highway (through the desert); prepare a way; clear the stones from the track, out of the path of My people.'"

Jehovah has, thus, not abandoned Israel, but designs their restoration hereafter. He now proceeds to tell them the grounds on which they may hope for it.

"15. For thus saith the High and Lofty One:[3] the eternal King; whose name is the Holy One: I dwell in the heavens—the high and holy place,[4] but with him also, that is of a contrite[5] and humble spirit: to revive the spirit of the humble and the heart of the contrite ones. 16. For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always angry; for the spirit would faint before me, and the souls which I have made. 17. For his wandering desires, (forsaking My ways and seeking his own)—I was angry and smote him. I hid Myself, and was wroth,

[1] Isa. lvii. 11-13.
[2] Isa. lvii. 14. Heap up the soil to a raised and level road.
[3] Isa. lvii. 15-18.
[4] The heavenly temple. Chap. vi. 1.
[5] Crushed and penitent.

because he went on, perversely, in the way of his own heart. 18. I have seen the (thorny) paths he has trodden—(he is wrong in saying they were hidden from Jehovah)[1]—and will heal him. I will lead him (in ways of pleasantness), and give him and his mournful ones consolation (for all their sorrows).

"19. Thus saith Jehovah[2] that creates the fruit of the mouth (bringing forth songs of joy and thanksgiving): 'Peace, peace, I proclaim, to the far off and to the near, (to the distant exile and to him who has remained in the land), and I will heal them.'

"20. But the wicked are like the uptost sea, which never rests, but casts up mire and mud (continually). 21. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked."[3]

Such an appeal, mingling with its just denunciation and keen irony, the tenderest patriotism and the sublimest faith; condemning the present, but lighting up the future; might have won respect and admiration for the aged prophet, alike for its fearlessness, its loyalty to his people, and its lofty poetry. But fanaticism neither reasons nor feels. Such a witness against the sins of the day could no longer be endured. If lesser men perished, Isaiah could not be suffered to live. A very old mulberry tree, near the Pool of Siloam, on the slopes of Ophel, outside the south-east wall of Jerusalem, is still pointed out as marking the traditional spot of his martyrdom. There, it is said by the Rabbis, and in the apocryphal "Ascension of Isaiah," he was sawn asunder[4] by order of Manasseh, for refusing to bow down to the king's idols. "And while the saw cut into his flesh," says the tradition, "Isaiah uttered no complaints and shed no tears, but he ceased not to commune

[1] Chap. xl. 27. [2] Isa. lvii. 19–21.

[3] This section of Isaiah, at least to the 11th verse of the 57th chapter, is assigned by no less keen a critic than Ewald to the reign of Manasseh, and treated as undoubtedly written by Isaiah. That others should refer it to the period of the Exile only shews how arbitrary are the standards of critical judgment. As to the origin and date of the later chapters of Isaiah, I shall speak more fully hereafter.

[4] Heb. xi. 37.

with the Holy Spirit till the saw had cloven him to the middle of his body."[1] If the prophets "hewed the ungodly" with the words of Jehovah:[2] if some of them, in despair at the national defection from Him, went about, like Micah, "stripped and naked," "wailing like the dragons, and crying out like the ostriches;"[3] the counterpart of the dervishes of modern Asia; the king and people could, at least, take the wild revenge of torture and the sword. But amidst all their trials of cruel mockings[4] and scourgings; of bonds and imprisonment; of stoning; being sawn asunder, and of nameless agonies besides, the blood of the martyrs then, as always, proved the seed of the Church. A Psalm which Ewald assigns to this period, and which in any case suits it, still survives:[5]

"CXLI. 1. Jehovah! I cry to Thee: O make haste to me!
O hear my voice when I call upon Thee!
2. Let my prayer rise before Thee as the odour of incense,
The lifting up of my hands like the evening sacrifice!

"3. Set a watch, O Jehovah, to my mouth;
Guard the gates of my lips;
4. Let not my heart be inclined to anything evil—
To do wrong with men set on iniquity;
And may I not taste of their dainties!

"5. Let the righteous smite me in love and reprove me:
It will be like oil of anointing[6] which my head will not refuse.[7]
For I still meet the attacks, even of the wicked, with prayer.
6. When their best men[8] are hurled down the stony rocks
They will listen to my words as welcome.
7. As the earth is torn up and broken by the plough,
So are our bones scattered at the gates of the grave!

[1] Ascensio Iesaiæ, v. 11-14.
[2] Hos. vi. 5.
[3] Mic. i. 8.
[4] Heb. xi. 36. Isa. lvii. 4.
[5] Ps. cxli. Delitzsch calls it an Evening Psalm of the time of Absalom.
[6] "Anointing oil," at feasts.
[7] Delitzsch.
[8] Literally, nobles or judges.

"8. But to Thee, O Jehovah my God, are mine eyes;
In Thee is my trust; let not my life be poured out!
9. Keep me from the snares that men spread for me;
The traps of the workers of iniquity!
10. Let the wicked fall into their own nets;
While, withal, I make my escape."

But perhaps the seventy-third Psalm,[1] whether dating from this period or not, is the best embodiment of the feelings of the godly in those evil days.

"LXXIII. 1. Good, and good only, is Elohim to Israel:
To them—that is—of a pure heart!
2. But I—my feet were almost gone,
My steps had well-nigh slipped.
3. For I was envious at the boastful haughty ones;
When I saw the prosperity of the wicked.
4. For they suffer no distress;[2]
Their persons are healthy and well fed.
5. They do not share in the troubles of other men,
Nor are they plagued like others.
6. Hence pride sits on their necks like a chain;
Violence hangs round them like a robe.
7. Their sins burst out from their fat insensate hearts,[3]
The evil thoughts of their breasts swell over.

"8. They scoff and talk wickedly of the oppression they design;
They speak haughtily, as if above other men.
9. They set (their mouth in the heavens, talking as proudly as gods),
And their tongue walketh through the earth.[4]
10. By this, the people who follow them, are drawn in their train,
And drink in, greedily, the (poison) water (of their words), as if from a full cup.

[1] **Ps. lxxiii.** [2] Ewald and Delitzsch.

[3] This sense is, in effect, adopted by Ewald from the Septuagint, Vulgate, and many moderns. A change in one letter in one of the Hebrew words makes the difference.

[4] Luther's translation is striking;

> What they wish, that must be ordered by Heaven.
> What they say, that must be done on earth.

"11. Hence, they say, 'How does God know?
And is there knowledge in the Most High?'
12. Behold, these are the ungodly—
(All their lives heedless of God, they are) yet the most prosperous.
13. It has been of no good that I have cleansed my heart
And washed my hands in innocency;
14. I have been plagued day by day,
My chastisement comes with each new morning.

"15. Should I think, 'I will say the same as they,'
I should be untrue to myself as one of the race of Thy children.
16. Yet, when I pondered the matter, to solve it,
It was, as I felt, too deep to understand—
17. Till I went into the sanctuary [1] of God
And marked the *end* of such men.
18. Thou lettest them stand only on slippery ground,
And, at last, Thou castest them down to ruin.

"19. How are they made desolate in a moment!
(They are swept away, like dust before the storm);
They perish with a terrible destruction.
20. As a dream passes when one awakes,
So, O Lord, when Thou rousest Thyself (to note them),
Thou wilt mock at such shadows!

"21. When my heart has been thus embittered,
And my very soul, (as it seemed,) pierced through,
22. I was dull, and without sense;
Like the stupid Behemoth [2] in Thy sight!

"23. But, as for me, I am continually with Thee;
Thou hast held my right hand;
24. Thou wilt guide me by Thy counsel,
And, hereafter, receive me to glory.
25. Whom have I in heaven but Thee?
But if I have Thee, I care nothing for aught else on earth.[3]
26. Let my heart and my flesh melt away.
God is the strength [4] of my heart, and my Portion for ever!

[1] Literally, sanctuaries (Ps. lxviii. 35). It seems here to refer to the different parts into which the temple was divided. Mühlau und Volck.

[2] Behemoth was the Egyptian name for the hippopotamus—the synonym of stupidity.

[3] Luther, and virtually Delitzsch.

[4] Literally, rock.

"27. For, lo, they that are far from Thee shall perish;
Thou destroyest every one that is faithless to Thee:
28. But, as for me, nearness to God is my joy;
I put my trust in the Lord Jehovah
To set forth and praise all Thy works!"

A Psalm like this reveals the spiritual trials of the faithful in days such as those of Manasseh. The old belief, that godliness brought worldly prosperity, had been rudely shaken, and the life beyond shone out more clearly as the earth grew dark. The immortality of the soul was realized more fully than hitherto. Death no longer wore the gloomy aspect it had borne even to the good Hezekiah. Men were no more to cry out in their sickness or troubles, "In death there is no remembrance of Thee; in the grave who shall give Thee thanks?"[1] "What profit is there in my blood when I go down to the pit? Shall the dust praise Thee? Shall it declare Thy truth?"[2] Nobler thoughts, such as we find in some other Psalms, took the place of dispiriting doubts. "Thou wilt not leave my soul to Sheol; neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One[3] to see corruption. Thou wilt make me know the path of life: in Thy presence is fulness of joy: in Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore."[4] "As for me, I shall[5] behold Thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied when I awake, with Thy likeness."[6] "God will redeem my soul from the power of Sheol; for He shall receive me."[7] Such great scholars as Dillmann, G. Baur, and Ewald assign the Book of Job, with its bright anticipations of immortality, to the first half of the seventh century before Christ—that is, to the age of Manasseh.[8] Consoling

[1] Ps. vi. 5. [2] Ps. xxx. 9. See also Ps. xxxix. and Ps. lxxxviii. 10–12.
[3] In Hebrew, "Holy Ones," but a Masoretic note directs that the singular be used.
[4] Ps. xvi. 10, 11. [5] Or, let me. [6] Ps. xvii. 15. [7] Ps. xlix. 15.
[8] Delitzsch thinks it was composed in the Solomonic Age. Art "Hiob" in Herzog. But see Dillmann's *Hiob*, p. 27; G. Baur, in Riehm, art. "Hiob;" Ewald's *Geschichte*, vol. iii. p. 705.

hopes of the future, under God's revelation, were becoming stronger in proportion to the trouble and gloom of the age.

Some other relics of the sacred poetry of Israel seem to light up still further these terrible years. The forty-ninth, the seventy-seventh, and the hundred and fortieth Psalms[1] appear, from internal evidence, to be utterances from amidst the fiery trials of Manasseh's reign.

"XLIX. 1. Hear this, all ye people,[2]
Give ear, all ye inhabitants of the world,
2. Low and high, rich and poor, alike!
3. My mouth shall speak of wisdom,[3]
The meditation of my heart shall be of true wisdom.
4. I will incline mine ear to the heavenly voice, which speaks to me darkly,
I will utter, to the strains of the harp, my dim weighty thoughts.

"5. Why should I fear when wickedness rules;
When the evil plots of liers in wait are round me;
6. Of men, who trust in their wealth and boast of their great riches?
7. Alas![4] no one of them can redeem his own life,
Or pay to God a ransom for it,
8. That he should live on in the earth and not see the grave.
9. For the redemption price of the soul[5] is too high for man,
And he must leave it unpaid for ever!
10. The wise die; so, also, the fool and the dullard,
And leave to others their wealth!

[1] The 49th Psalm is of uncertain date, but suits the reign of Manasseh closely. The 77th is assigned by Delitzsch to the time of Manasseh or Josiah. The 140th is ascribed to Manasseh's reign by Ewald. Nothing is more arbitrary, however, than the dates given to most of the Psalms by different critics. Thus the 77th is assigned by Olshausen and Hitzig to the time of the Maccabees; to the time of the Babylonian exile, by Ewald and many others; and to the destruction of Samaria, by Moll. The 140th, according to Delitzsch, is a late imitation of David; Hitzig assigns it to the time of Johannes Hyrcanus, B.C. 135-106; Ewald, to that of Manasseh; Rosenmüller, to that of the Return from Babylon; while Moll thinks it may be David's. Can anything shew more forcibly the arrogance of such dogmatism as that of the latest school of Biblical critics as to the date of the different Psalms? How much is their confident language worth?

[2] **Ps. xlix.** [3] The great theme since the time of Solomon.

[4] Hebrew, *Ach*; not *brother* only, but also an exclamation = Ah! Alas!

[5] = Life.

11. Their graves are their homes for ever;[1]
Their abodes from generation to generation;
Though, while alive, men everywhere lauded their names.[2]

"12. Such a man abides not in honour,
But is like the beasts that perish.[3]

"13. This is the lot of these vain confident fools,
And of those, after them, who follow their teaching.
14. Like a flock of sheep they are folded in Sheol, the underworld.
Death is their shepherd, who leads them forth to *his* pastures;
The upright shall have dominion over them;
Their beauty shall soon fade away,
Sheol, the underworld, shall be their dwelling!

"15. But Elohim will redeem my soul from the hand of Sheol,
For He shall receive me![4]

"16. Be not thou, then, afraid when one grows rich,
When the glory of his house increases.
17. For when he dies he shall carry nothing away;
His glory shall not go down to Sheol with him.
18. Though in his life-time he boasted of his fortune,
And men praised him—as they always do him who does well to himself—
19. Yet he will go to the generation of his fathers,
Who shall never more behold the light of the sun.

"20. Such a man abides not in honour,
But is like the beasts that perish."

A similar strain runs through the seventy-seventh Psalm,[5] if, indeed, the fifteenth verse do not shew it to be a song of some unknown one in the Northern Kingdom, before its fall, for Jacob and Joseph are mentioned, but not Judah.

[1] By the change of two letters. So Septuagint, Targum, Pesh., Olshausen, Ewald, and others.

[2] Gesenius. Ewald. I think they are right.

[3] Literally, the cattle that men slaughter so early, and suddenly cut off.

[4] Ewald and Lengerke render this line: "When it shall have seized me." Mühlau und Volck, and Delitzsch, have the rendering I have adopted.

[5] Ps. lxxvii.

"LXXVII. 1. I will cry aloud to Elohim: yes, I will cry to Elohim
aloud,
And He will hear me!
2. In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord:
My hand was stretched out in prayer all night, without ceasing;
My soul could not find comfort.
3. If I thought upon God I could but moan;
If I kept thinking—my spirit was overwhelmed.

"4. Thou didst hold my eyelids from closing;
I was so troubled I could not speak.

"5. I called to remembrance the days of old,
The years of times gone by;
6. I thought in the night, of my joyful songs in the past;
My spirit pondered anxiously why they were gone!

"7. 'Will the Lord cast me off for ever?
Will He be favourable no more?
8. Is His mercy clean gone for ever?
Will His promise never be fulfilled, from generation to generation?
9. Has El forgotten to be gracious?
Has He, in anger, shut up His tender mercies?'

"10. Then thought I, My trouble comes thus;
But the right hand of the Most High still reigns;
11. Therefore I will think of the works of Jehovah,
And recall to my mind all Thy wonders, of old.
12. I will meditate on all Thy works,
And let my thoughts dwell on Thy deeds!

"13. Elohim, Thy way is in holiness!
Who is so great a God as Elohim?
14. Thou art that God who doest wonders,
Who hast made known Thy might among the nations.
15. Thou didst redeem with Thine arm Thy people,
The sons of Jacob and Joseph.

"16. The waters saw Thee, O Elohim,
The waters saw Thee, and whirled back;
The sea trembled in its depths.
17. The clouds poured out water;

The upper skies sent forth their voice;
Thine arrows, the lightning, flew around;
18. Thy thunder rolled along in the whirlwind;
Thy lightnings illuminated the world:
The earth trembled and shook.

"19. But, amidst all, Thy way was through the sea,
Thy path through the great waters;
Though Thy footsteps were not seen.

"20. Thou leddest Thy people, by the hand of Moses and Aaron,
As a shepherd leads his flock!"

Still another of these most ancient of lyrics—the hundred and fortieth Psalm—seems to date from the same dark years.

"CXL. 1. Deliver me, O Jehovah, from evil men;
Preserve me from men full of violence,
2. Who think out evil in their hearts
And stir up strife continually.

"3. They have tongues sharp pointed as those of serpents.
Adder's poison is under their lips!

"4. Keep me, O Jehovah, from the hands of the wicked,
Preserve me from men full of violence,
Who design to trip up my steps!
5. The haughty ones have hidden snares and cords to take me;
They have spread a net for me in my path:
They have set traps for me.

"6. But I say to Jehovah: Thou art my God:
Hear, O Jehovah, my loud supplications!
7. Jehovah, the Lord, is the strength of my salvation:
Thou hast covered my head in the day of battle.
8. Grant not, O Jehovah, the wishes of the wicked;
Let not his devices succeed.

"9. When those that hem me about raise their head,
May the evil they have wished for *me* cover themselves.
10. Let (punishments from Thee, like) burning coals, be hurled down
on them;

Let them be thrown into the fire;
Into deep pits in the earth, from which they can never come out!
11. Let not the slanderer be established on the earth;
The violent man—may the wicked hunt him to destruction!

"12. I know that Jehovah will maintain the cause of the afflicted;
The rights of the poor:[1]
13. The righteous will, surely, give thanks to Thy name:
The upright shall dwell in Thy presence."

With such enthusiasm for the ancient national faith in the bosoms of many, it was impossible that any persecution could extirpate the worship of Jehovah. But it was the age of the martyrs: the counterpart in the ancient history of the Church, of its fiery trials under Antiochus, Decius, and Diocletian. The pure gold was being refined in the furnace, to come out all the brighter in the happier but too brief days of Josiah. The persecution under Jezebel, in the Northern Kingdom, had ended in the ruin of Ahab's House, but the truth had, in great measure, died; in Judah the prophets and people had to yield for the time, but the truth was finally triumphant. A purer spiritual light than it had ever before enjoyed, broke over the land from amidst the darkness of Manasseh's reign.

The political results of the heathen policy were, as usual, disastrous. Jeremiah expressly traces the ruin of the kingdom to Manasseh,[2] and so also does the Book of Kings.[3] Philistia, Edom, Moab, and Ammon revolted during his reign, and were independent at his death. Judah sank into contempt. Moab and Ammon heaped contemptuous reproaches and revilings on its people, and made insulting forays across the border.[4] Henceforth, except for a short

[1] The "afflicted" and "poor" are the persecuted people of God.
[2] Jer. xv. 4. [3] 2 Kings xxi. 11; xxiii. 26; xxiv. 3, 4.
[4] Zeph. ii. 8–10. For "magnified themselves against their border," *read*, "shewed their pride by violating." See also Jer. xlvii., xlviii., xlix.

time in the reign of Josiah, they were no longer under the Jewish yoke.

But the heaviest blow came from Assyria, the ancient enemy of the Palestine nations. Sennacherib had reigned fourteen years after the accession of Manasseh. The terrible catastrophe his armies had suffered in Philistia and before Jerusalem, under Hezekiah, had effectually kept him, as we have seen, from again invading Canaan, if indeed the disturbed condition of his eastern dominions permitted his doing so, and at last he had been murdered by two of his sons.

Esarhaddon, his favourite son and destined successor, seems to have been absent from Nineveh, in B.C. 681, when his father was killed, but he resolved to avenge him. Collecting a numerous army, the parricides were defeated on the Upper Euphrates, and fled to Armenia, where they were allowed by the reigning prince to remain, and received a grant of territory, in which they and their descendants henceforth permanently settled.

An inscription of Esarhaddon,[1] unfortunately mutilated, lights up vividly the fierce passions of this long hushed storm.

". . . I vowed from my heart," says Esarhaddon. "My liver[2] was inflamed with rage. I immediately wrote letters saying, that I assumed the sovereignty of my Father's House, and lifted up my hands to Assur, the Moon, the Sun, Bel, Nebo, Nergal, Ishtar of Nineveh and Ishtar of Arbela, and they accepted my prayer. In their gracious favour they sent me an encouraging oracle—'Go, fear not! we march at thy side; we aid thy expedition!' (Being in winter quar-

[1] Found on clay tablets at Kouyunjik. It is published in Layard's *Inscriptions*, plates 54–58; or, *Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia*, vol. iii. plates 15 and 16; and in *Records of the Past*, vol. iii. p. 103, ff., where it is translated by H. Fox Talbot.

[2] Juvenal, "Quanta jecur ardeat ira." The ancients made the liver the seat of rage or anger.

ters). I could not move for a day or two: the chariot horses remained tethered; the regiments in their places; the tents unstruck. Meanwhile every preparation was made for the campaign, with the utmost haste. A great snowstorm (in the mountains), in the month of January (B.C. 680), darkened the sky and stopped the advance, but I did not give up. Then, as a bird spreads its wings, so I displayed my standards, as a signal to my allies, and took the road to Nineveh with much toil, by forced marches. Getting before my troops in the hill country, their powerful warriors attacked my advance and discharged their arrows, but the terror of the gods, who are my lords, overwhelmed them, and they retreated before the valour of my army. Ishtar, queen of war and battle, stood by my side, and broke their bows, and, in her rage, destroyed their line of battle—proclaiming herself to the enemy as an 'unsparing deity.'

"By her high favour I planted my standards (at Nineveh) where I had intended."[1]

Esarhaddon was a very different man from his father. The ablest general Assyria ever had, he was no less marked by his genius as a ruler. In him, for the time, subject nations found a mild and conciliatory bearing from an Assyrian monarch. During his short reign he extended the empire to the widest limits it ever reached.

The affairs of Babylonia demanded his immediate attention on his accession. A son of Merodach Baladan, on the coast lands of the Persian Gulf, at the mouth of the Euphrates, formerly ruled by his father, revolted and proclaimed his independence. Having taken the city of Ur, in the north, he killed Esarhaddon's prefect, and installed himself in his place, refusing to do homage at Nineveh, or "even," as Esarhaddon says, "to enquire after the health of my majesty." An army launched against the "rebel" was, however, enough to send him in full flight to the king of Elam, in the mountains; the hereditary foe of Assyria. But the Elamite king was anxious at the

[1] The rest of the column is unfortunately broken off.

time to keep on good terms with Esarhaddon, and put to death the unfortunate suppliant for shelter. On this, another son of Merodach Baladan, then also in Elam, feeling no longer safe there, recrossed the frontier, threw himself at Esarhaddon's feet, and was not only pardoned, but had his brother's territories restored to him.

The city of Babylon next engaged the attention of the Great King. Going thither himself, he commenced its restoration, for it had remained almost a ruin, since its capture by Sennacherib in B.C. 691. The walls were restored; the temples, including that of Bel, rebuilt; and the gods which his father had carried off to Nineveh, brought back. The plunder taken from the different cities of Babylonia was, also, as far as possible, returned to their inhabitants, to propitiate them, while Esarhaddon, at once for his own security and glory, and to flatter the proud city, made it his residence for half of each year. Under such fatherly government Babylon soon became once more a great city, the rival of Nineveh, and was even, hereafter, little as Esarhaddon dreamed it, to be its conqueror. Petty kings and chiefs on its former territory were duly crushed; one of them being burned alive as an example; and such terror of Esarhaddon's arms inspired, that he henceforth reigned in peace over Babylon, till his death in B.C. 668.[1]

From the Euphrates, the Great King next marched his armies to Palestine, whose princes, headed by Abdimulkuth, king of Sidon, at the instigation of Tirhakah of Egypt, had refused to pay tribute. But the resistance was short, for the rebellious city was at once invested, and soon fell.

"Conqueror of the city of Sidon on the sea," says the record, "sweeper away of all its villages, I rooted up and

[1] Smith's *Babylonia*, pp. 129, ff. Smith's *Assyria*, pp. 139, ff.

destroyed its citadel and palace, and threw them into the ocean. Having caught its king, who had fled from my arms like a fish, into the middle of the sea, I cut off his head, and that of another chief, and sent them as a trophy to hang up over the great gate of Nineveh. His treasure, his goods, his gold, silver, and precious stones, with skins and teeth of elephants, costly woods, purple and yellow cloths of every description, and his regalia, I carried off. Men and women without number, countless sheep, oxen, and asses, I swept off to Assyria."[1] Demolishing Sidon, he crowned his triumph by building a new town on its site, with the name of the "City of Esarhaddon," transferring to it part of the population of the destroyed city, and placing it under an Assyrian general. He hoped thus to retain the trade of Sidon, but it passed to the great Phœnician metropolis, Tyre.

A grand durbar of all the princes of Palestine and Cyprus was now summoned, to do homage to the conqueror, and, in terror at his victory, twenty-two of them attended. Among these came Manasseh, glad once more to pay tribute, for the independence achieved by Hezekiah had been of very short duration. Baal, king of Tyre; the kings of Edom, Moab, Gaza, Askelon, Ekron, Gebal, Arvad, Beth-ammon, and Ashdod, also presented themselves, with Abibaal, king of Samaria, the last known bearer of the title.[2] Chiefs from Cyprus, moreover, with Greek names and ruling over Greek settlements—Pythagoras, king of Citium; the kings of

[1] *Annals of Esarhaddon. Records of the Past*, vol. iii. p. 111. Smith's *Assyria*, p. 129.

[2] *The Assyrian Eponym Canon*, Ext. 37, p. 139, line 17. Smith adds, that in the year 645, under Assurbanipal, Esarhaddon's successor, an Assyrian governor ruled at Samaria (p. 128, as above). This would illustrate Isaiah's words (chap. vii. 8: see vol. iv. p. 326), "Within sixty-five years Ephraim shall be broken as a nation." The governor very probably was appointed much earlier than 645, as Assurbanipal was joint king of Nineveh as early as 669.

Salamis, Paphos, Idalium, and Aphrodisium, with others, swelled the glory of the Assyrian.[1] But they had to pay for the honour of waiting upon him, and for their past offences. Esarhaddon was at the time building a new palace in Nineveh, and contributions of materials for it were exacted from them.[2] "Great beams and rafters of cedar, cypress, and other woods, from the mountains of Lebanon and Sirar;[3] statues of the gods; bas reliefs; blocks of stone, of various kinds; slabs of alabaster, they forwarded to Nineveh."

It was now the year B.C. 676,[4] and after attacking and taking Arza, on the small stream called the River of Egypt, at the southern boundary of Palestine—Esarhaddon returned to Nineveh. His last feat had shewn his feeling towards the Pharaohs, whom he thus insulted, without, for the time, being able to injure them more seriously. Captives sent from the East replaced the populations he had carried off from central Palestine; including in all probability not a few from Judah, and some of the remnant of the Ten Tribes hitherto left in their own land. Their fate in Assyria is recorded by the Great King himself.

"I caused crowds of them to work in fetters, making bricks. I pulled down the whole of the small palace, and caused much earth to be brought away in baskets from the fields, and threw it on the site of my new palace, and completed the mound on which it was to stand, with stones of great size."[5] "With captives, young and old, male and female, I marched to the gate of Nineveh, and left them to

[1] The name of the king of Paphos was Itudagon, "Dagon is with him."

[2] *Keilinschriften*, p. 244. *Records of the Past*, vol. iii. pp. 111, ff. Menant, *Annales*, n. 241.

[3] Either the range of Antilebanon or Mount Hermon. *Wo lag das Paradies*, p. 104.

[4] Assyrian Canon, in *Keilinschriften*, p. 321.

[5] *Annals of Esarhaddon*, col. 5.

stay in front of it for ever, with dogs and other beasts."[1] In the place of these unfortunates, motley crowds were brought to Palestine from the scenes of Esarhaddon's eastern campaigns;[2] Babylonians and people of Erech, Susiana, Elam, and southern Persia; thus adding largely to the heathen element formerly sent by Sargon from almost the same regions,[3] and degrading still further the blood of at least a portion of the future Samaritans.[4]

The Annals for the next few years record various expeditions. The irruption of wandering tribes from beyond the Caucasus—to become so dangerous hereafter—had already begun, but Esarhaddon, crossing the mountains east of Nineveh, met and drove back their hordes, which then turned to the west and overran part of Asia Minor—the first wave of the fierce swarms which, from time to time, alarmed the world for the next eighteen hundred years. Cilicia and its neighbourhood, in Asia Minor, now felt the scourge of the Assyrian armies. There, the Great King "trampled on the heads" of the rough mountaineers, who had hitherto been unsubdued; burning twenty-one of their larger and smaller towns; slaying multitudes of the inhabitants, and imposing heavy tribute on the survivors.[5] The "enemies and heretics" of Telassur,[6] south-east of Assyria, in the mountains—were then assailed and crushed, and part of the wild hill country of the Medes, till now uninvaded by Assyria, was harried and laid waste. "Chiefs of fortresses and their men, horses and chariots, oxen and sheep, mules and

[1] *Annals*, col. 2. [2] Ezra iv. 2, 10. [3] See vol. iv. pp. 288 ff.
[4] Lenormant, *Lettres Assyriologiques*, vol. i. p. 64.
[5] *Annals*, col. 2.
[6] 2 Kings xix. 12; Isa. xxxvii. 12; Telassur = The Hill of Assur. Perhaps in Babylonia. But its position is doubtful. *Keilinschriften*, p. 203. Delitzsch, Fried., *Wo lag das Paradies*, p. 265.

Bactrian camels, and mighty spoil," were carried off to Nineveh.

The distant Arabian peninsula was the scene of another campaign. Hitherto the distance, the intervening deserts, and the parched and burning plains of Arabia itself, had prevented any serious efforts to subdue it. For nearly two hundred years the Assyrian territories had bordered those of outlying Arab tribes, and Tiglath-pileser, Sargon, and Sennacherib had ravaged the districts near Edom, but they had not attempted to march far into Arabia. Hazael, king of Edom, now, however, appeared in Nineveh, imploring that the gods of his nation, taken away by Sennacherib, might be restored, and offering to pay a heavy tribute for the favour. In a gracious mood, Esarhaddon readily granted the request, though not till he had caused an inscription in his own honour, and in that of the god Assur, to be engraved on the idols. He gave a maiden of the palace, moreover, to Hazael, to be his queen, and sent her and the gods back to Edom. He did not forget, however, to impose a tribute of sixty-five camels, in addition to that which had been paid to Sennacherib. But still heavier imposts having been levied on Hazael's son, at his father's death—ten mana (over twenty-seven pounds weight troy[1]) of gold, 1,000 precious stones, fifty camels, and other items, in addition to the previous burdens—the oppressed country refused payment, and a great invasion followed, to enforce it; the Assyrian troops marching as far as Hazu and Bazu, perhaps the Uz and Buz of Scripture, a distance of 700 or even 900 miles from Nineveh.[2]

"I left behind me," says the king, "Bazu, a land very

[1] Sayce, in *Records of the Past*, vol. i. p. 168.

[2] 100 or 140 *kasbu*. See *Records of the Past*, vol. iii. p. 116. Smith's *Assyria*, p. 132. A kasbu was about 7 miles.

remote; exceedingly arid, the very home of famine—140 kasbu of ground, rocky, broken, strewn with sharp stones, wild, burning with heat, and full of scorpions, like the desert. I marched where no king before me had ever gone." "Eight sovereigns—two of them reigning queens[1]—I put to death. The bodies of their soldiers I flung away like so much clay. Their gods, their wealth, their treasure, and their people, I carried off to Assyria. I swept away their followers like a field of corn."[2] Submissions, restorations of gods, additional slaughters, and other features of Assyrian warfare, followed, till Esarhaddon, tired of Arabian exploits, sought other regions in which to play the royal beast of prey.

Egypt had, at intervals, for centuries disputed with Assyria the monarchy of the world, and had stirred up constant revolts in Palestine, causing ceaseless trouble. Sennacherib had weakened Tirhakah in the battle of Eltekeh, in B.C. 701, but the disaster to his host had afterwards forced him to an ignominious retreat. But in B.C. 672, Tirhakah again succeeded in persuading Baal, king of Tyre, a highly favoured vassal of Esarhaddon, to throw off the Assyrian yoke; hoping, no doubt, to draw most of the princes of Palestine into the movement. To defeat this combination, the Great King set forth at once for the sea-coast. Tyre was now at the height of its prosperity—in part through the recent destruction of Sidon—and, having the command of the Mediterranean by its fleet, felt that it could not be taken while Egypt was its ally. It therefore boldly defied the Assyrians, who could only invest it on the land side. Furious at being thus balked, Esarhaddon resolved to invade and

[1] Like the Queen of Sheba.
[2] *Annals*, 1st inscription, col. 2; 2d inscription, col. 3.

conquer Egypt itself. Marching along the sea-coast, and across the desert, amidst the greatest privations for want of water, he at last met the enemy, near Askalon, in the Philistine country, and overcame him. Pressing on, other defeats in Egyptian territory forced Tirhakah to flee to his old capital, Napata, in Ethiopia.[1] Memphis now fell into the hands of the conqueror, who made it his capital, and Tirhakah's empire was for a time overthrown. The whole country was then broken up into twenty districts, each with its own king—Necho, of Sais, being raised over all, as their chief, with Memphis for his capital; an anticipation of the Mameluke system, at the close of last century, when twenty-four beys held the whole kingdom, and met from time to time, under a president, at Cairo. Assyrian garrisons and prefects completed the new scheme of government.[2] Egypt had at last been humbled. The affront offered to Nineveh, centuries before, by the invasions of Thothmes III. and Amenhotep II., had been avenged, and the words of Isaiah, spoken in the reign of Hezekiah, had had their first fulfilment.[3]

Having thus crushed the one rival of his power,[4] Esarhad-

[1] Smith, *The Assyrian Eponym Canon*, Ext. 39, p. 141.

[2] Maspero, *Histoire Ancienne des peuples de l'Orient*, 2d ed. pp. 427–8.

[3] Isa. xix. See vol. iv. p. 394.

[4] Necho fought for Assyria against the Egyptian army of Tirhakah. That king is painted red on the monuments, not black; and his queen, at his side, pours out water to the ram-headed god Amen Ra, and plays on the sistrum. His sister, like himself, is not black, but red, on the monuments, as if the Ethiopian dynasty had been of Egyptian descent. The great rock temple of Bessa seems to have been built by him. It shews him offering incense to the god Anher, and fruit to the god Amen-Ra and to Mut. He has ram's horns, like Alexander the Great, and like his predecessors, Sabaco and Rameses II.; a claim to be the son of Amen-Ra—the ram-headed god. A small oval of terra cotta, found at Palmyra, has the name of Tirhakah on it. Did his conquests extend so far? On a monument at Thebes he is represented as conquering the Assyrians. He grasps the hair of ten Asiatic prisoners, who stand bearded and holding daggers, while he is about to strike them with his battle mace. Dr. Birch, in *Trans. Bib. Arch.*, vii. 196, ff.

don returned to Nineveh, leaving behind him on the rocks of the Dog River of Phœnicia, by the side of the triumphal tablets of Rameses II., an inscription, recounting his own victories, and proclaiming himself king of Egypt, Thebes, and Ethiopia.[2] Satiated with glory, he henceforth devoted himself to the gentler ambition of finishing his new palace, which he made even

THE ASSYRIAN KING REFRESHING HIMSELF AFTER A HUNT.[1]

[1] The royal umbrella is held over his head by a eunuch. A wild bull, just shot down, or taken, lies at his feet. The beardless figures are eunuchs. The one in front has a fly flap, to protect the king from annoyance.

[2] Oppert, *Mémoire sur les Monuments de l'Egypt et de l'Assyrie*, pp. 38–43, 80. ff. E. de Rougé, *Etude sur les Monuments de Tharaka; Mélanges d'Archéologie égyptienne et assyrienne*, Nov., 1872, p. 16.

more magnificent than that built by his father Sennacherib; its vast aggregate of courts and halls covering more than 100 acres. The roofs were supported by beams of cedar, resting on columns of cypress, inlaid and strengthened by bands of sculptured silver and iron; its gates were guarded by huge lions and bulls sculptured in stone; its doors were of ebony and cypress incrusted with iron, silver, and ivory. But meanwhile his health gave way. Anxious, therefore, to propitiate the gods, now that his life was ebbing, he built throughout the country no fewer than thirty-six temples "covered with plates of gold and silver, and glittering like the sun."[1] On the 12 Tyyar, or April, B.C. 670, he summoned round him a great assembly of the dignitaries of the empire, at Nineveh, and formally associated with himself, as co-ruler, his son Assurbanipal, whom the Greeks knew as Sardanapalus. But his day was well-nigh over. He had fallen seriously ill; in B.C. 669 his health gave way, and after pining for a time amidst the splendour, he retired to Babylon,[2] where he died in the next year, B.C. 668.

[1] G. Smith, *Zeitschrift*, etc., 1868, pp. 94, 95. [2] Maspero, p. 428.

CHAPTER IV.

THE LATER YEARS OF MANASSEH.

After Esarhaddon's return from Egypt, he resolved, as we have seen, to preclude such troubles respecting the succession as had darkened the opening of his own reign, by associating with himself, in the government, his eldest son, Assurbanipal, afterwards the greatest of the Assyrian kings. Like Sapor in after-times, he had been named king before his birth, and the ceremony of his installation was accompanied with extraordinary pomp.

Meanwhile bad news arrived from Egypt. Esarhaddon had scarcely left it before Tirhakah once more seized Thebes and Memphis, which fell after a bloody siege;[1] the kings and governors so lately appointed, fleeing before him to the desert. The condition of the Nile valley had come to be exactly that which Isaiah had foretold. The twenty Assyrian satraps were constantly plotting against their over-lord at Nineveh, and fighting among themselves. The country was divided into hostile kingdoms, which fought "every one against his brother, and every one against his neighbour, city against city, and kingdom against kingdom." For about twenty years the unhappy land was wasted with fire and sword. Tirhakah on the south, and the rebellious Assyrian kinglets in the rest of the Nile valley, required the return of the Assyrians from their Palestine garrisons, once and

[1] Oppert, *Les Sargonides*, p. 57.

again, to restore order. At last the formal reconquest of the Nile was necessary, and Assurbanipal at once undertook it. Twenty-two kings of Palestine and Cyprus, he tells us, gathered, to pay their tribute to him, when he reached the Mediterranean coast, about 667 or 666; Manasseh among them.[1] Under his father, Tyre had been invested on the land side by an Assyrian army, but its king now submitted to pay tribute, and operations against him ceased. "The towers I had raised, I pulled down," says the Great King; "on sea and land all his roads that I had taken I opened, and I received his abundant tribute."[2] Collecting the contingents of the Syrian and Palestine vassals, he now pressed on, by the coast road, to Egypt, and, having defeated the army sent to check his advance, forced Tirhakah to evacuate, first Memphis, and then Thebes, to which the Assyrians, reinforced by the contingents of the dispossessed satraps, ascended in a flotilla; the passage being accomplished in forty days. The old arrangements of Esarhaddon were forthwith restored; twenty vassal kings were set once more over as many districts, but heavier tribute than before was imposed, and stronger garrisons placed in the different cities, to keep Tirhakah from invading the land again from the Soudan, to his capital Napata, to which he had been forced to flee.

Hardly had the Great King returned to Nineveh, however, before a revolt, stirred up by the restless intrigues of the petty rulers, broke out again on the Nile. The native kinglets, galled by the Assyrian yoke, sent emissaries, inviting Tirhakah to come back, and undertaking to re-establish him on the throne of the Pharaohs, if he left them

[1] The title "King of Judah," remains; the king's name is lost, but it must have been Manasseh.

[2] *Annals of Assurbanipal*, *Records of the Past*, vol. ix. p. 40.

undisturbed in their principalities. Of this league, Necho, the chief of the kings first appointed by Esarhaddon, was the soul. The capture of a messenger sent to Tirhakah, however, revealed the conspiracy before it was ripe, and Necho, with some other leaders, was seized and sent in chains to Nineveh.

"My generals," says Assurbanipal, "heard of the plot, and having captured their messengers and despatches, saw their seditious work. These chiefs they took and bound their hands and feet in bonds and fetters of iron, and sent them to Nineveh." The Assyrian generals speedily quelled the rising, throwing down the walls of the rebellious cities, and killing great numbers of their inhabitants. Assurbanipal, moreover, tried to check the invader for the future by an unexpected step. Instead of putting Necho to death, he restored him to favour, "as the representative of the old royal family of Egypt." "Costly garments," he tells us, "I put on him, and ornaments of gold; his royal image I made for him; rings of gold I fastened on his feet; a sword of steel in a gold sheath I gave him, with more, besides, than I could write, for the glory of my name." Thus loaded with honours, he was sent back to Egypt, in company with a staff of military men and officials, and under stricter conditions of vassalage than before. Paralyzed by this step, and, it is said, warned in a dream,[1] Tirhakah, now old, gave up the contest and returned to the Soudan, where he soon after died,[2] after a reign of twenty-six years.

But a new and vigorous leader at once took the place of the brave Ethiopian; Rut-Ammon, a son of Tirhakah's sister and of Sabako, the So of Scripture. Having retaken

[1] Herod., ii. 139. The name Sabako has been substituted for Tirhakah.
[2] Assurbanipal says, "he went to his place of night."

Thebes, he pushed on to Memphis, and took it after a long siege, in which Necho fell into his hands and was put to death; Psammetichus, his son, one of the petty kings, only saving his life by flight to Syria.[1] Egypt was once more delivered from the Assyrian.

Assurbanipal was thus forced to undertake a second great expedition to the Nile; but his mere presence was enough to scare away Rut-Ammon from Memphis, and make it open its gates once more to the invader. The kings, prefects, and governors, set up by Assyria, dissembling their late treason, returned and renewed their submission. The tide of conquest then rolled on towards the south. The Assyrians once more ascended the Nile, and assailed Thebes, which had yielded to the "rebel," and now bore the full vengeance of the monarch it had betrayed. Abandoned by Rut-Ammon, as Memphis had been, it could offer no resistance, and was ruthlessly plundered.

Thebes, or, in Old Egyptian, Tepe—this being its public, as "No" was its sacred name—lay on both sides of the Nile, which is 1,500 feet broad at the spot. The Libyan and Arabian hills on the two sides of the river retire from it at this place, leaving a plain on which there are now nine larger and smaller villages, with scattered clumps of dôm and date palms, and spots of rude culture, near the water's edge. On the left side of the river, as you ascend it, lay the great city; and opposite it, on the other shore, stretched away its city of the dead, running up into the desolate, blinding white limestone hills, threaded by the "Valley of the Tombs of the Kings," the sides of which were even then pierced by vast excavations, wondrously sculptured and painted, where the Pharaohs of ancient days lay, each in his

[1] Maspero, p. 430.

glory—huge, tunnel-like caverns, descending, as in the case of the tomb of Sesostris, hundreds of feet into the bowels of the mountain. On the Thebes side of the river, temples and palaces rose in magnificence unimaginable to those who have not seen their wonderful ruins, which are scattered over miles, from Luxor to Karnak. But the day of visitation of the city of the great god Amon had come. "In trust on Assur, Sur, and the great gods, my lords," says Assurbanipal, "my troops defeated Rut-Ammon in a great battle, on a wide plain, and overcame his army. He then fled alone and betook himself to No, his royal city. My troops followed him in a march of a month and ten days, over dreadful roads, and took that city in its whole circuit, and drove the enemy away like chaff. Gold and silver as the dust of their land; vessels, of metal; precious stones, the plunder of the palace, garments of Berom, . . . great horses, men and women, in countless numbers I led away to captivity to Nineveh, my capital, bringing them safely thither, and they kissed my feet. Two lofty obelisks, covered with carving, 2,500 talents—that is, about seventy tons—in weight, I carried off to Nineveh."[1] The spoil was immense. The city was swept as if by a flood.[2] Nahum, the prophet, who wrote a little later, pictures the completeness of its destruction. Addressing Nineveh, he says: "Art thou better than No-Amon,[3] that was enthroned amidst the canals of the Nile, surrounded by waters, whose walls and bulwarks were broad sea-like streams? Cush—that is, the Soudan—and Upper and Lower Egypt, were her exhaustless strength; Punt (that is, Somali land)[4] and Libya were her allies. But

[1] *Annals of Assurbanipal*, col. ii. [2] Oppert, *Memoire*, etc.

[3] Thebes was No-Amon, "the seat or city belonging to the sun-god Amon." Mühlau und Volck. So also the Septuagint.

[4] Ebers understands by Punt, "vassal tribes of Arabs." In Riehm it is spoken of

she has gone away captive into exile; her young children were dashed in pieces at every corner of her streets; they cast lots for her nobles, *who* would have them as menial slaves; all her great citizens were carried off bound in chains."[1] The destruction of Thebes took place about the year B.C. 665, towards the middle of the reign of Manasseh, and created an immense excitement over all Western Asia.

War was now to come even nearer Judah. Tyre had again been refractory, and was once more besieged. "Baal, king of Tyre," says the record, "had disregarded my royal will, and would not hear the words of my lips. I raised towers round him on sea and land, seized his roads, and forced him to submit to my yoke." The water of the city had been cut off, and this compelled a surrender. Its king had trusted to help from Egypt, but that kingdom was now powerless. Yahimelek, the heir apparent, Baal's own daugh-

as a race living west of the Libyans, themselves next to the west side of the Egyptian Delta. Knobel thinks that it was the modern Turkish province of Hejaz, running back from the coast of the Red Sea, on the north half of its eastern side. The people of Punt sold themselves largely as mercenaries to Tyre and other powers; taking part, for example, under the standard of Egypt, in the battle of Carchemish. (Jer. xlvi. 9. Ezek. xxvii. 10; xxx. 5), though at other times fighting against her. They were also famous as traders in the markets of Tyre, sending thither the produce of their turquoise mines, which were famous over the world, and exporting large quantities of incense, for which their country bore a high repute. The inscriptions and pictures on the monuments represent them as wandering tribes of a deep brown colour, and strictly distinguish them from the settled Cushites, on whose confines they lived. Indeed, the name Punt, which means "flight," accurately marks their nomadic habits.

A hundred and ninety photographs, including about three hundred and sixty faces, have been taken from Egyptian monuments by Mr. Petrie, who says (*Bab. and Orient. Record*, ii. 134-137) that the people of Punt ("on both shores of the south part of the Red Sea"—in this differing from Knobel, as already quoted) have a strong resemblance to Egyptians of the higher class. There were two races in ancient Egypt, one with an aquiline nose and fine expression, the other with a profile retreating from the chin and a "snouty" nose. The aquiline type is identical with the people of Punt. It seems, indeed, far from impossible that the civilization of Egypt was due to a Punt race penetrating to Abydos by the Kosseir road, and so originating the early dynasties of the Nile valley. Sayce says Punt was on the Somali coast.

For Libya the Hebrew has Phut.

[1] **Nah. iii. 8-10.**

ter, and the daughters of his brothers, with large sums of money, were sent out to the camp of Assurbanipal, and put in his hands. The prince he restored; the princesses he sent to his harem. Other kings, including, no doubt, Manasseh, now hastened to submit to the conqueror, most of them seeking, like the king of Tyre, to propitiate him by giving one of their daughters to him as a concubine; themselves humbly kissing his feet.

The glory of a king thus uniformly victorious spread through all lands. The king of Tubal, in Armenia, sent him one of his daughters, and voluntarily paid a tribute of horses; the king of Cilicia, in Asia Minor, also sent a daughter. Envoys from Gyges, the king of Lydia, in the south-west of Asia Minor, tendered their master's homage; but, as it proved, this friendliness was short-lived. Ere long, Gyges was an ally of Egypt against Assyria.

The pacification of the Nile valley was only momentary. Psammetichus, the son of Necho, and now head of the old Egyptian royal family, impatient of an inferior position, resolved to crush the petty chiefs around him, who were now reduced to twelve in number; and was able to secure a contingent of Greeks—chiefly Carians and Ionians, from Gyges—to aid his native force. The Lydian king had noticed the constant disturbances in the Assyrian provinces, and feeling assured that Egypt could not be permanently held, at such a distance from Nineveh, threw his influence into the scale against it. With such assistance, the Assyrian garrisons were soon expelled, never again to enter the Nile valley. Psammetichus ascended the throne on the 14th February, B.C. 664,[1] while Manasseh had still twenty-four years

[1] Ebers' *Aeg. Königstochter*, vol. i. p. 211. Brugsch says, B.C. 666. *History*, vol. ii. p. 277.

to reign. Henceforth Greek mercenaries played a prominent part in the history of Egypt. It had lost its foreign conquests, but Psammetichus energetically strove to put it into a secure state of defence on all its frontiers. Henceforth the capital was no longer at Thebes, or up the Nile, but in the Delta, near the sea. Palestine was apparently left undisturbed, except by a tedious siege, or rather investment, carried on against Ashdod or Azotus, for twenty-nine years. But his long reign marks a renewed vigour, which was afterwards to have great results. Architecture, literature, and the arts, were nobly encouraged, for even Egypt was beginning to feel the influence of foreign nations; thanks to the fondness of Psammetichus for the Greeks. The introduction of a new form of handwriting—the demotic or popular—instead of the cumbrous hieroglyphics, and of the hieratic, or sacred "hand," of the past, was only a sign of the new life astir in all directions. From this time, however, for nearly a century, Egypt disappeared from the political horizon of Jewish history.

It would be of little use to follow in detail the story of Assurbanipal's later campaigns, after his capture of Tyre. He might almost have claimed the honour of being the chief desolator that had hitherto afflicted the nations. His annals breathe only a ferocious ambition to be the lord of the world, at any cost to mankind. In Minni, a region bordering on Armenia, he tells us, he threw down, destroyed, and burnt towns without number; and carried off people, horses, asses, oxen, and sheep, as spoil. The country, he laid waste along fifteen days' march, and to crown all, its king was killed by his own attendants, as the Assyrians approached, and his corpse torn in pieces; his brothers, his relatives, and all his connections being also murdered.

The Scythians of Gog,[1] the name given to a race, living, it would seem, in the wide region from the north-eastern steppes of Central Asia to those of Southern Russia, next suffered. Kiepert assigns them the tracts north of the Hindoo Kusch, now part of Turkestan,[2] where they were known as the Saka; but Western Asia had to do, more immediately, with those from the vast plains of South-western Europe. From these wild regions a flood of barbarians swept out, even as far as to the plains and mountains of Elam, east of the Tigris, at its entrance into the Persian Gulf. The whole land, we are told, was "overwhelmed with the shock of the terrible storm," the king beheaded, fighting men without number slain, and the waters of the Ulai[3] choked with their corpses. Teumann, the king of Elam, it appears, had resolved to invade Assyria. But, says Assurbanipal—

"I prayed to the lofty Istar . . . and she came to save me. I said, 'Goddess of Arbela, I am Assurbanipal, king of Assyria, the work of thy hands. I delight in thy courts.[4] Teumann, king of Elam, hater of the gods, has gathered his army, and prepared for war. He orders his soldiers to go to Assyria. O thou Archer of the gods, throw him down, and crush him like a weight in the midst of the battle, tear . . . '

"My acceptable prayer Istar heard. 'Fear not,' said she, and caused my heart to rejoice. 'At the lifting up of thy hand thine eyes shall be satisfied with my judgments on thine enemies. I will grant thee favour.'

"Moreover, in the dead of the very night when I thus invoked her, a seer, while asleep, dreamed, and, behold, Istar spoke to him, and he repeated it to me. She entered, surrounded with glory, holding a bow in her hand; its mighty arrow on the string, and her countenance set. Then she spoke. 'Carry off the spoil. I will come to the place

[1] Ezek. xxxviii. 2.

[2] *Atlas Antiquus*, Map ii.

[3] Dan. viii. 2. The Eulæus. It flowed past Susa in Persia, and falls into the united Tigris and Euphrates. It is now the Karun and was a river of ancient Elam. Mühlau u. Volck, and *Wo lag das Paradies*, p. 329.

[4] See Ps. lxxxiv. 10.

set before thee. I will go with thee. I will guard thee. I will rest in my place in the temple of Nebo, eating food, drinking wine, enjoying music, and glorifying my divinity till I go with thee. I will cause thee to have the desire of thy heart.'[1] Do not regard thy life. In the midst of battle she, of her loving goodness, protects thee, and overthrows all who resist."

The victory that followed was, of course, attributed to the favour of the goddess. Leaving the desolated country, Assurbanipal turned against the king of Gambulu, one of the allies of the king of Elam, on the marshes of the lower Euphrates,[2] and swept it "like a hailstorm." Dimann, the king, his brothers, his wife, sons, daughters, concubines, singing men and singing women, he took alive, and sacked the palace. The head of Teumann was hung round the neck of Dimann, and the Assyrian army returned to Nineveh, amidst great rejoicings, "with the conquests of Elam and the spoils of Gambulu, musicians making music." The great men of both countries were then brought before Assurbanipal; the head of Teumann having meanwhile been fixed over the great front gate of Nineveh. One of the Elamite nobles, happier than the rest, was able to kill himself with his own sword. The tongues of Dimann and of other chief captives were torn out, and they were then skinned, while yet alive, except Dimann, who was roasted to death over a furnace. His unfortunate brothers were also put to death, and, after being quartered, the pieces were sent to different places. Other prisoners of name were crushed to death before the great gate "in the midst of Nineveh," by their own attendants, who were forced to perform the hideous task. Such were the ideas of a triumph then: but war and victory are very little better in any age. They are, at all times, the sum of all villanies!

[1] Ps. xxxvii. 4.

[2] *Wolag das Paradies*, p. 240.

During the years in which these ceaseless campaigns were drenching wide regions with blood, Manasseh was reigning in Judah, and bitter persecution of the worshippers of Jehovah still continued. He was at last, however, to feel that the vengeance of God may overtake the sinner, even in this life.

Assurbanipal had appointed his younger brother Saulmugina to be king of Babylon,[1] but only as a subordinate, required to address his superior at Nineveh as "the king, my lord." But such a position did not satisfy the viceroy, and he aspired to independence. In the wars with Elam and Gambulu he had supplied soldiers to the enemy, and he had also sent emissaries to form a league against Assurbanipal among all the nations, from the Euphrates to the Mediterranean; as Merodach Baladan had done in the reign of Hezekiah. "The people of Akkad, Chaldæa, Aram,[2] and the sea-coast" on the west, and "from the Red Sea to the Persian Gulf" on the south, "tributaries dependent on me," says the Great King, "he caused to revolt against my hand." "The kings of the Goim, of Syria, and of Ethiopia, he caused to rebel, and they set their faces with him." A great crisis had risen. The whole empire was agitated. Egypt had been already lost by the triumph of Psammetichus. The sovereignty of the world now threatened to pass to Saulmugina, at Babylon.

But Assurbanipal was equal to the emergency. At the head of an army he crushed the revolters in one direction, while different hosts, under his generals, defeated and humbled them in others. Arabia was invaded, and "swept bare as by a desolating flood." "Tents, pavilions, dwellings,"

[1] He had, in fact, been appointed by his father, Esarhaddon, but Assurbanipal confirmed the appointment.

[2] Syria in the widest sense.

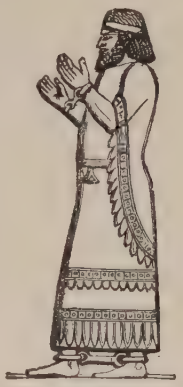
were given to the flames. Oxen, sheep, asses, camels, and men were carried off in such numbers, that a camel was sold in front of the gate of Nineveh for half a silver shekel, and slaves were correspondingly without value. The few who escaped the invaders were reduced to such misery, that they were forced to eat the flesh of their children. Ammuladin, king of Kedar, in Northern Arabia, was defeated by the king of Moab, a vassal of Nineveh who remained faithful, and sent to Nineveh with iron chains on his hands and feet.[1] Sippara, Babylon, Borsippa, and other cities, had been fortified by Saulmugina, and were now besieged and taken by his royal brother. Elam rose to help the great revolt, but it, also, was crushed, in a battle which the Great King led in person. Akkad was made so utter a wilderness that, as in Arabia, the survivors betook themselves to cannibalism to preserve life.[2] At last, after a tremendous struggle over widely separate regions, Saulmugina was taken alive, and the rebellion collapsed.

The time for vengeance had now come. Saulmugina himself was thrown by his brother into a "fierce burning fire." The tongues of great numbers of men were pulled out, and multitudes were thrown alive among the "stone lions and bulls" in "a pit," or quarry; the fall from a height apparently being counted upon to kill them. But, whether living or dead, their "limbs were cut off," and thrown to "the dogs, bears, eagles, vultures, birds of heaven, and fishes of the deep; till they grew fat on them." The great men of Babylon, Cutha, and Sippara, who had aided the rebellion, were made slaves.

Among those who had listened to the overtures of Saul-

[1] Smith's *Annals of Assurbanipal*, col. viii. lines 43, 44.
[2] Smith's *Annals of Assurbanipal*, col. iv. lines 100, 101.

mugina. Manasseh seems to have compromised himself, as one of the kings of the "sea-coast." The Assyrian general in Palestine, therefore, having got him, by some means, into his power, sent him, like the other rebel princes, in chains, to the Euphrates, for judgment. He seems, indeed, for some special reason, to have been treated with exceptional sternness. His feet were bound with fetters; his hands with manacles, and a ring, to which a cord was attached, was passed through his lips or nostril, to lead him by it, as men led a wild beast.[1] Isaiah had told Hezekiah that Jehovah would put His hook in the nose of Sennacherib, and His bridle in his lips, and turn him back by the way he had come,[2] and Ezekiel, hereafter, was to tell the Pharaoh that he would have hooks put in his jaws, as was done with the huge crocodile of his own canals;[3] and to denounce other princes in the same terms.[4] This contemptuous torture now fell on one who had been as bitter an enemy to Jehovah, as any of the heathen, and in this plight he was led off with a multitude of captives to the East; his special place of captivity being Babylon,[5] which, as we have seen, had long been the residence of the Assyrian kings for the half of each year. That the Egyptian lean-



A PRISONER MANACLED AND FETTERED.

[1] This is the meaning given by Fürst and by Mühlau and Volck, the latest authorities, to the word ḥoah, translated in our version "among the thorns." 2 Chron. xxxiii. 11. The ḥoah was a ring or hook passed through the nose of large fishes when they were put into the water again, to be kept till needed. Job xli. 2, where "thorn" (ḥoah) = ring or hook. The meaning, "thorns," which is correct in some passages, came from their hook-like form and sharpness, as our word "thorn" comes from a root meaning "that which pierces."

[2] 2 Kings xix. 28. Isa. xxxvii. 29. [3] Ezek. xxix. 4. [4] Ezek. xxxviii. 4.

[5] 2 Chron. xxxiii. 11.

ings of the Jewish king, shewn so strikingly in the name of Amon, given to his son, should have led him to plot against Assyria, is probable. In the figurative language of the prophet, he had gone "in the way of Egypt, to drink the waters of the Nile."[1] The intrigues of Saulmugina, coming after the loss of Egypt to Assyria, by the successful revolt of Psammetichus, would find the Jewish king, like other princes of Syria and the sea-coast, ready to listen to them, as his father had listened to those of Merodach Baladan, from the same region.

The rebellion of Saulmugina fixes the year B.C. 648 as the date of Manasseh's defection; his deportation to Babylon following in the year after.[2] He had now reigned about forty-seven years and was nearly sixty years old; with no prospect before him, as it seemed, but a violent and shameful death. How he was at first treated is unknown, but he must have been for a time kept in misery and degradation, if we may judge from his subsequent history. The gods he had trusted in Jerusalem had been helpless to save him, while Jehovah, whom he had insulted, had delivered his father from the hands of Sennacherib. Humbled to the dust, he realized, for the first time, the greatness of his sins, and "besought Jehovah, as now his own God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, and prayed unto Him." Nor was the penitence of even so great a sinner rejected. Assurbanipal had, before this, shewn favour to Necho of Egypt, brought to Nineveh under similar circumstances,[3] and was

[1] Jer. ii. 18. Sihor (black, muddy) = Nile.

[2] See *Keilinschriften*, pp. 240, ff., for a vindication of the historical character of the passage in Chronicles respecting Manasseh's captivity. How weighty the fact that a critic so keen as Schrader should defend an incident which had been long relied upon by the advanced school, as a striking instance of the *unhistorical* character of passages in that book! Also, see *Dictionary of Bible*, art. "Manasseh;" and Thenius, *Die Bücher der Könige*, on the verses.

[3] See page 77.

induced, perhaps from the wish to defend himself, on the side of Egypt, by one who might henceforth be a useful ally, to restore Manasseh to his kingdom. "God was intreated" of the captive, says the sacred chronicler, "and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem, into his kingdom." "Then," it is added, "Manasseh knew that Jehovah is God."[1] A prayer, said to have been uttered by him in his trouble, is still extant in Greek, and is included in the apocryphal books of the German and English Churches. It may be that this composition, though thus doubtful, is a transcript of words understood to have been used by him, for it is expressly said in Chronicles[2] that his prayer was both in the "Book of the Kings of Israel," and in the collection of the words of Hozai, a famous prophet of the day.[3] The oldest trace of its existence, however, is found in the Apostolic Constitutions.[4] Fritzsche, a great authority, thinks it dates at least from before the Christian era, when so many apocryphal writings were composed by Greek-speaking Egyptian Jews.[5] Presenting, as it does, however, a glimpse of ancient Jewish religious life and thought, it helps us to realize, in some measure, what must have been in the mind of the humbled old man in his lonely exile. Slightly amplified, for the sake of clearness, it runs thus:

"O Lord Almighty, the God of our fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and of their righteous seed, who hast made heaven and earth, and all their wonders;[6] who hast chained the sea (within its appointed limits) by the word of Thy command: who hast set confines to the

[1] 2 Chron. xxxiii. 12, 13. [2] 2 Chron. xxxiii. 18, 19.

[3] For "the seers," 2 Chron. xxxiii. 19, read "Hozai."

[4] Bk. ii. 22. The earlier of the eight books of the so-called Apostolic Constitutions are ascribed, by different authorities, to various dates, from the end of the first century to the end of the third of our era. Apos. Const. in Herzog, vol. i. pp. 449, ff.

[5] *Exeg. Handbuch zu den Apok.*, vol. i. p. 158.

[6] Literally, "economy," laws, order, etc.

bottomless abyss, and sealed it up by Thine awful and glorious Name; before whom all things feel a holy fear, trembling before the sight of Thy power: for the greatness of Thy glory is overwhelming, and Thy angry threatening against sinners cannot be endured; but Thy merciful promise is immeasurable and unsearchable; for Thou art the Lord Most High, of great compassion, long-suffering, very merciful, and repentest Thee of the evils suffered by man.

"Thou, O Lord, according to the abundance of Thy goodness, hast promised repentance and forgiveness to them that have sinned against Thee, and in the fulness of Thy mercies, hast appointed repentance to sinners, that they may be saved. Thou, therefore, O Lord, the God of the just, hast not appointed repentance for the just; for such as Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, who have not sinned against Thee;[1] but Thou hast appointed repentance for me, the sinner: for I have sinned above the number of the sands of the sea. My transgressions, O Lord, are multiplied; they are multiplied, and I am not worthy to gaze upon or behold the height of heaven—Thy dwelling-place—for the multitude of my iniquities. I am bowed down by many chains of iron so that I cannot lift up my head, and there is no rest for me: for I have provoked thine anger, and done evil in Thy sight, in not doing Thy will and not keeping Thy commandments; in having set up abominations,[2] and having multiplied objects of Thine abhorrence.

"Now, therefore, I bow the knee of mine heart, imploring Thy grace. I have sinned, O Lord, I have sinned, and I acknowledge my transgressions. Wherefore, I humbly beseech Thee, forgive me, O Lord; forgive me, and destroy me not utterly in my iniquities. Store not up evil against me for ever, in anger, and condemn me not to go down to the depths of Sheol. For Thou art God, the God of the penitent, and in me Thou wilt shew forth all Thy goodness, for Thou wilt save me, unworthy though I be, in the greatness of Thy mercy. And I will praise Thee continually, all the days of my life; for all the Powers of the heavens extol Thee, and Thine is the glory, for ever and ever. Amen."

On his return, the change in Manasseh's feelings shewed itself strikingly. Persecution was at once stayed. The

[1] The "perfect justness" of Abraham and those like him, is an idea of later Judaism. See Luke v. 32; xv. 7, etc.

[2] Idols.

foreign idols he had set up in Jerusalem and even in the temple, and also their altars, were taken away; the altar of Jehovah was replaced and sacrifices offered on it, apparently by himself, while Judah was commanded to serve Jehovah alone. The high places, through the land, however, were suffered to remain, though only permitted to be used for sacrifices to Jehovah.[1] But the evil he had done had rooted itself too deeply to be easily counteracted.

This change of religious policy was accompanied with a healthier feeling in political affairs. The neighbouring lands, which had been more or less dependent since the days of Uzziah, had thrown off the yoke of Judah, under the weak rule that had latterly prevailed. Philistia, Edom, Moab, and Ammon were not only independent, but more audacious in their bearing than ever before,[2] and henceforth maintained their freedom, except, as has been said, for a short time under Josiah. But if they could not be subdued, their inroads could at least be checked. Garrisons were therefore placed in all the fortified towns, and an outer wall built round the City of David,[3] the earlier wall of Hezekiah having been perhaps broken down, if, indeed, it had ever been finished; and the outer of the two courts designed by Solomon to enclose the temple, but left unfinished since his time, was now at last completed.

Nothing, however, could obliterate the memory of the past. The very name of Manasseh continued to be abhorred, and was used instead of that of Moses, when a dishonourable one was sought to shield that of the great lawgiver.[4] He is one of the kings whom the Rabbis hold

[1] 2 Chron. xxxiii. 15–17.
[2] Zeph. ii. 4–19. Jer. xlvii. 1; xlix. 22; xxv. 20.
[3] 2 Chron. xxxiii. 14.
[4] In Judg. xvii. 30, "Manasseh" is substituted for "Moses." See vol. ii. p. 520.

to have no part in the life to come—the others being Jeroboam and Ahab. At his death, moreover, he was buried in the garden of his own house,[1] not in the City of David, among his ancestors.

[1] Septuagint.

CHAPTER V.

AMON AND THE FIRST YEARS OF JOSIAH.

JUDAH.

	Auth. Version.	Riehm.	Schenkel.	Steiner.
AMON, ...	B.C. 643–641	(Same)	642–640	. . . . .
JOSIAH, . . .	641–609	641-610	640–609	642–611

EGYPT.

PSAMMETICHUS, . . B.C. 664–612 (Schrader says, 666-612).
NECHO II., ... 612–596

ASSYRIA.

ASSURBANIPAL, B.C. 668–648 ?
The remaining kings of Nineveh are hardly known. Sayce gives the following names and dates:
ASSUR-ETIL-ILANI-YUKINNI, son of Assurbanipal,[1] . . B.C. 668–648
SIN-SARRA-ISKUN, ... 648?
ESARHADDON II. (Sarakos of the Greeks) . . . . . ?
Destruction of Nineveh, . . 606
(But see other authorities, p. 112.)

THE long reign of Manasseh, extending over more than half a century, had greatly demoralized the kingdom. A gross and sensual idolatry had sapped ancient morals and corrupted the whole fabric of society. The enthusiasm of a vigorous minority had effected an outward reform under Hezekiah, but this restraint had been gladly thrown off by the bulk of the people, under his son. Nations as a whole have, in all ages, refused to sustain for any length of time

[1] Oppert gives the name as Assuredilili, or Sardanapalus II. Schrader supposes he was the only king after Assurbanipal.

a high morality, which curtails their self-indulgence and imposes strictness of life. Puritanism, in its sincerity, is always limited to a narrow section, and a reaction against it, when the opportunity offers, is certain.

Hezekiah seems at his death to have had several sons,[1] but we know nothing of any of them except Manasseh, whose birth, twelve years before the close of his father's reign, seems to have been hailed by him as that of the destined heir to the throne, perhaps from the special love he bore to his mother, Queen Hephzibah. It is quite possible, however, that he was not the eldest, and that his brothers, born of various mothers, may have been set aside by the palace intrigues of the heathen court party, that they might secure a child-king, in whose name the abuses they had cherished under Ahaz could be easily re-introduced.

At Manasseh's death, however, no danger of any change of public policy seemed likely. The heathen faction, including the chiefs of the kingdom, having held power and consolidated their influence for more than fifty years, could control the new king as they pleased. Amon, therefore, the late king's son, a young man of twenty-two years of age, ascended the throne peaceably. His mother, Meshullemeth, "the friend (of God)," was the daughter of an unknown father, Haruz, "the diligent," of Jotbah, "the kindly," a village of Judah.[2] Amon himself seems to have been popular;[3] but, from whatever cause, he roused the enmity of the court party. It could not be laid to his charge that he refused to comply with the established heathenism, for it is expressly said that he walked in his father's steps, and served and worshipped the idols he had set up, "multiplying his tres-

[1] 2 Kings xx. 18. Isa. xxxviii. 19.

[2] 5 Kings xxi. 19-26. 2 Chron. xxxiii. 21-25. Jerome says that Jotbah was in Judah.

[3] 2 Kings xxi. 24.

passes, and shewing none of the penitent humility of Manasseh's late years. It may be, however, that signs of a serious thoughtfulness, not as yet carried into outward act, alarmed the dominant faction, for within two years he was cut off by a palace conspiracy, like that by which his ancestor, King Joash, perished.[1] But the success of his murderers was short-lived. The common people[2] rose in arms, and, overpowering all opposition, seized and slew the actors in the plot. Amon was buried with due honours in the tomb built in the garden of Uzzah, where Manasseh already rested. A great public assembly of the nation[3] was then convened, at which, in accordance with ancient usage, Josiah, the dead king's son, was elected to the throne, though only eight years of age.

Under the child thus raised to the throne of David, Judah was destined to enjoy its last brief glimpse of prosperity before it finally sank into ruin.[4] His mother, Jedidah, "the beloved of God," the daughter of Adaiah, "the honoured of God," of the village of Boscath, on the rolling slopes of the Shephelah, near Lachish,[5] may, perhaps, have deserved her lofty name, and given her boy the priceless benefit of a godly mother's example and counsels. But even if, as the Gebirah, or Queen-Mother, she enjoyed the first place in the court, her position and that of her son must have been very difficult. A strong party like that which had so long controlled Judah, was dangerous to oppose in an

[1] Kings xii. 20.

[2] Am-ha-aretzin. In Ezek. vii. 27 this phrase is used to distinguish the common people from the higher classes. It latterly came to mean strictly the plebeians, the mass of the people, and was used as a term of contempt, as our "boor" is the German "baur," a peasant.

[3] B.C. 638. Thenius gives the date as B.C. 641.

[4] 2 Kings xxii.–xxiv. 2 Chron. xxxiv.–xxxv. Jer. i.–xii. Jos., *Ant.*, X. iv. 5.

[5] Josh. xv. 39. The queen-mother's family seems to have been one of no special distinction.

age when, as in the case of Amon, assassination might speedily follow any signs of independence. Although, therefore, Josiah, as we are told, shewed a religious bias even at his accession, it was probably known only to his mother and a few faithful adherents of the discredited faith of their fathers, who still ventured to gather round her.

Things, in fact, were rapidly growing even worse than hitherto. The "princes of Judah"—that is, the heads of the clans—and the royal family in all its wide ramifications, were devoted to heathenism. New follies, introduced from different nations, were constantly coming into vogue. High places to the goat-god of Egypt or to the hairy satyrs thought to inhabit the deserts, were built at the gates of Jerusalem.[1] The Philistine rite of leaping over the threshold of holy places was copied from the temple of Dagon,[2] and the members of the royal family, the nobles, and many others ostentatiously dressed in foreign style; adopting, doubtless, its idolatrous emblems and ornaments. Violence and license prevailed. The powerful oppressed the weak, perverted justice, mocked at innocence, and sought by craft what they could not attain by force. "Jerusalem," cried Zephaniah,[3] "is rebellious, polluted, and oppressing. Her princes and judges are like roaring lions and evening wolves, who leave nothing for the morning. Her prophets are self-willed and treacherous; her priests have polluted the sanctuary and done violence to the Law."

However well disposed, therefore, Josiah might be, as a child, he was helpless for a time, alike from his tender years and from the hatred around him to any reform. How dark and prejudiced, moreover, must the mind of a boy of eight—

[1] 2 Kings xxiii. 8. Geiger and Graetz read "Seirim," satyrs, or goats, for "Shiarim," gates; apparently on good grounds.

[2] Zeph. i. 9. See vol. iii. p. 43. [3] Zeph. iii. 1, 3.

the grandson of Manasseh, and son of Amon—have been? A change, if possible in the end, could be effected only by patient waiting.

Yet, amidst the gloom, there was already a rift in the clouds. The fierce persecution of Manasseh's reign had ceased, and the scattered and hidden band of the Faithful once more gathered together, as the forlorn hope of religion. They might be few, but they had been tried in the fire, and glowed with earnest conviction. No disappointments could shake their trust in Jehovah. To fear Him was with them the beginning of wisdom. Patriots in the grandest sense, they believed that the salvation of their country depended on its return to Him and active obedience to His Law. The spirit of the time still shews itself in some contemporary compositions that have fortunately come down to us. The tone of a circle which embraced men like the prophets Zephaniah, Nahum, Jeremiah, and Habakkuk, must have been almost ideally lofty. Nor were these the only confessors in those evil days. The thirty-seventh Psalm, among others, has been assigned by various critics to this period.[1] Composed in a series of proverb-like sentences, the first word of every verse beginning with the successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet, it illustrates in its artificial form a peculiarity not uncommon in the later poetry of Scripture, while its contents take us back to an age when evil appeared to triumph, though hope in God guided some, like a star, through the darkness. It ran thus:

"XXXVII. 1. At evil doers fret not thyself;[2]
At the prosperity of the wicked be not thou envious.
2. For like the grass they shall soon be cut down,

[1] It is ascribed to David in the title it now bears, but neither Delitzsch nor Moll think this reliable. Hitzig and G. Baur think it was written "before Job"—that is, in Manasseh's reign.

[2] Ps. xxxvii.

Like the herb, now green, they shall wither away.
3. Be trustful in God and do good,
Enjoy the peaceful quiet home in His own land,
Which God bestows on thee, and cherish faithfulness to Him.
4. Delight thyself also in Jehovah :
So shall He give thee the desires of thy heart.
5. Give to Jehovah the care of thy way ;[1]
Trust also in Him, and He will plan it for thee :
6. He will make thy uprightness clear as the light ;
Thy innocence as the noonday beam.
7. Dumb in thy stillness, rest thou in Jehovah; wait patiently for Him ;
Fret not thyself about those who prosper in their way ;
At those who use their prosperity only to do evil.
8. Hold in thine anger and leave off thy wrath ;
Fret not thyself ; for that only leads thee to sin.
9. For evil doers shall be cut off ;
But they who trust in Jehovah shall inherit the land.
10. Wait but a little while and the wicked shall be no more ;
And if you seek for the place where he has been, he is no longer there.
11. But the meek will inherit the land,
And delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

"12. Should[2] the wicked plot against the godly,
And gnash upon him with his teeth—
13. The Lord shall laugh at him,
For he sees that his day is coming.

"14. Have[3] the wicked unsheathed the sword and bent their bow,
To bring down the poor and helpless ; to slay such as walk uprightly ?—
15. Home to their own heart shall go their sword ;
Their bows shall be broken !

"16. Trifling though that may be which the righteous man has,
It is better than the riches of many wicked.
17. For the arms of the wicked shall be broken,
But the righteous man is upheld by Jehovah.

"18. Jehovah keeps note of the upright ;
Their inheritance will be theirs for ever.

[1] Literally, "Roll thy way on Jehovah." [2] S for Z. [3] H for Ch.

19. They will not be ashamed in the evil time ;
In days of famine they shall be satisfied.
20. Complete destruction shall come on the wicked ;
The enemies of Jehovah are as the fat sheep of the pastures ;
They shall vanish in smoke—ay, vanish away !
21. Let the wicked borrow (as he cannot help doing)—he cannot repay,[1]
But the upright, though gentle (to debtors), can give away.
22. For the blessed of God shall inherit the land,
And whom He curses will be rooted out !
23. Meted out by Jehovah are the sure steps of such a man,
And He delighteth in his way.
24. If he stumble, he shall not fall utterly down,
For Jehovah holds him up by the hand.
25. Now old, I have once been young,
But I have never seen the godly forsaken,
Or His children begging bread ;
26. Ever merciful, He gives and lends each day,
And his posterity is blessed.

"27. See that thou turn from evil and do good ;
So shalt thou dwell in the land for ever.
28. For Jehovah loves the right,
And never forsakes His saints ;
Evermore are they guarded by Him.
But the generation of the wicked shall be rooted out.
29. The upright will inherit the land,
And dwell in it for ever.

"30. Pious lips speak ever the true Wisdom ;
The tongue of the godly talketh of the Right.
31. The law of their God is in their heart ; their steps are sure.
32. To[2] slay the righteous is the bad man's work ;
For this he lies in wait and watches.

"33. But Jehovah gives him not into his hand,
And even if he be condemned by man, *He* does not pronounce him guilty.
"34. Cleave[3] with strong hope to Jehovah: keep His way;

[1] He is sinking from depth to depth. Forced to borrow, he does not repay.
[2] It should be "Ts," instead of T, but we have no such letter.
[3] Should be "K," to suit the Hebrew alphabet.

So will He exalt thee to inherit the land,
And see with gladness the destruction of the wicked.

"35. **R**ough, wicked men[1] have I seen, great and terrible,
Spreading themselves like a tree full of sap, in its native soil.
36. Yet they passed away, and, lo, they were no more,
And though I sought them, they could not be found.

"37. **Set**[2] thine eyes on the just man; mark the upright;
This man of peace has a posterity after him.[3]
38. But evil doers shall be destroyed together:
The posterity of the wicked shall be cut off!
39. **T**o Jehovah do the righteous owe their salvation from evil.
To Jehovah, their stronghold in the day of trouble!
40. Jehovah stands by them, and delivers them;
Delivers them from the wicked and helps them,
Because they trust in Him."

The spiritual chaos in Judah, amidst which light was slowly beginning to assert itself, was in keeping with the tumult and confusion in the great political world of Asia and Egypt. Assurbanipal still reigned at Nineveh, but his vast military efforts, succeeding those of so many of his predecessors, had gone far to exhaust his empire, and bring about its ultimate fall. His conquest of Egypt in the beginning of his reign, as we have seen, had scarcely survived his departure from the banks of the Nile. Psammetichus I., son of Necho I., had founded a new and victorious dynasty in the land of the Pharaohs. After his father's violent death,[4] Psammetichus, who had been Assyrian viceroy of Athribis—one of the twenty districts into which Egypt was at that time divided—had fled to Syria, but Assurbanipal had, meanwhile, succeeded Esarhaddon, and having restored Assyrian authority on the Nile,[5] appointed

[1] It should be in the singular. The plural is used to obtain the letter **R**.
[2] Should be "**Sh**."
[3] His house is not cut off like that of the wicked
[4] See page 82.
[5] B.C. 666–665. Maspero, p. 430.

Psammetichus to the dignity his father had held, though with less independent power.

But the new viceroy was not a man to remain willingly subordinate. His triumph, by the help of Greek mercenaries, over the mob of petty vassal kings around him, has already been told. He now took a step which secured not only his supremacy, but the stability of his House. Marrying the heiress of the dethroned Ethiopian dynasty, he united its rival claims and those of the native Egyptian House, as Henry VII. closed the strife between the Red and White Roses by his marriage with Elizabeth of York. Henceforth he was the legitimate king of Upper and Lower Egypt, and soon felt himself strong enough to rise against the Assyrian garrisons, which he ere long expelled,[1] remaining master of the whole country, from the First Cataract to the Mediterranean, and founding the Saite line of kings—the last of the great national dynasties of Egypt.[2]

Busied with his eastern wars, Assurbanipal had no leisure to disturb Psammetichus in his hard-won independence. Each year saw the Great King engaged in fresh campaigns against nations which resented his odious tyranny. Over these he was able to record a succession of doubtful triumphs, but they were gained with the very life-blood of his empire. The crushing of Elam opened the way for the rise of another power, that of the Medes, before which Nineveh itself was one day to fall.

Elam—the High Land—was an extensive region on the east side of the lower Tigris, bordered on the west by the province of Babylon, on the north by Assyria and Media, and on the south by the Persian Gulf. It thus embraced

[1] B.C. 656. Maspero, p. 488.

[2] Maspero, p. 489. E. de Rougé, *Notice de quelques textes hieroglyphiques récemment publiés par M. Greene*, pp. 36–52.

parts of the present Laristan, Chusistan, and Arabistan ; a picturesque, mountainous region : its capital, at least in later times, being the famous city of Shushan, so often mentioned in Daniel as a royal residence of the kings of Babylon, and in Esther as a favourite with the kings of Persia. Like the Assyrians, the Elamites were of the Shemitic stock, while the Medes, whose rise their predominance had hitherto checked, were of the Aryan race ; that which embraces the Teutonic nations, including our own. The vast range of the Taurus and Anti-Taurus mountains, after skirting the south of Asia Minor, trend south-east, as the mountains of Kurdistan, and north-east, as those of Armenia. There, the broad valley of the Kur divides them from the lofty Caucasus chain, which runs south-east, from the Black Sea to the Caspian ; its highest summit, Mount Elborz, rising to the height of nearly 18,000 feet above the sea. Another gigantic range, running nearly north and south, and now forming the boundary between Kurdistan and Persia, connects, in a rude triangle, the bifurcation of the Armenian and Kurdish mountains, and after thus enclosing the wild upland region of the great salt lake, Van, which lies 5,000 feet above the sea, continues in a south-east direction to the shores of the Indian Ocean. Opposite this rampart of hills, at a distance of about 300 geographical miles, the great range of Elborz—the "watch-towers" —stretches along the south of the Caspian Sea, trending east and south-east till it mingles with the peaks of the Hindoo Kusch ; Demavend, its loftiest summit, attaining the awful height of nearly 20,000 feet.

From the western side of this vast bed of mountains, in the long stretch of country once forming Assyria and Elam, flow a succession of streams, cleaving through profound

gorges and opening into fertile valleys, to form the tributaries of the Tigris. The regions to the east, on the other hand, enjoy the shelter as of a huge wall, separating them from the disputes and affairs of Western Asia. Lying under the shadow of the highlands, at their northern extremity, the great lake, Urumiyah, is formed by streams which pour down from a network of lofty hills on all sides, filling a basin 85 miles in length, and 25 in breadth. More than 4,000 feet above the sea,[1] and without any outlet, the waters of this vast mountain lake, owing to evaporation, are so salt that no fish can live in them, while the shores sparkle with salt crystals. The rest of the country, however, to the south-east, is a vast rolling table-land, watered by a number of streams, the borders of which are capable of sustaining a large population, though at a distance from them the soil turns to a desert. The mountains produce copper, iron, lead, rich marbles, and many varieties of precious stones. Here and there naked, they are more frequently clothed with thick forests, in which the pine, the oak, and the poplar, the oriental plane, the hazel, and the willow, mark the descending zones of growth. The pear, the apple, the quince, the cherry, the olive, the peach, and the melon, seem indigenous, and flourish luxuriantly in some of the richer valleys; but trees of any kind, though abundant on the mountain slopes, are scarce on the upper table-land, except near streams or lakes. Wheat and vegetables of excellent quality, with many subtropical plants, can, however, be raised wherever irrigation is possible. Thus, as a whole, the country is marked by the charms and defects of a moun-

[1] Maspero says (p. 452) that Lake Urumiyah is below the sea level, like the Dead Sea, but he is under a mistake. Brockhaus' *Lexicon* (vol. xiv. p. 942) says it is 1,300 metres above the Mediterranean. Maspero has been misled, apparently, by its saltness, which has coupled it with the Dead Sea, in his mind, in more ways than one.

tainous region. Fertile in some places, it is seamed in others with ridges of bare hills incapable of cultivation, and fertility everywhere depends on the presence of water.[1]

This vast territory, even the valleys of which lie from 4,000 to 5,000 feet above the sea level—a region of almost Arctic cold in winter, but delightful in spring, and not oppressively warm, in the uplands, even in summer, had been originally inhabited, in common with the whole region of modern Persia, by a Scythian race, related, distantly, in language, to the modern Finns and Turks. These, however, had been subjugated and driven out in a remote age by successive immigrations of Aryans from regions now unknown, but very probably from Eastern Russia; a race brave and warlike, but for ages weakened by division into independent tribes. The vast wall of mountains separating them from the valley of the Tigris had not prevented Assyrian ambition from coveting their territory. Their early traditions spoke of one of their kings as having been deposed and crucified by an invader from Nineveh, and from the time of Tiglath-pileser I., in the twelfth century before Christ, their land had been repeatedly desolated, its towns sacked and burnt, numbers of its population slain, or carried off as slaves, and its fields swept of their flocks and herds, by the armies of successive Assyrian invaders.

A leader was, however, at last found, able to weld the medley of wild tribes into a nation, and from that moment Media took its place as a formidable power. In some clans the subordinate chiefs had formed an oligarchy controlling the nominal head; in others, the sub-clans had been leagued into rude confederate republics; in still others, a government very similar to that of the ancient Hebrews had obtained,

[1] Rawlinson's *Great Monarchies*, vol. iii. pp. 44-72. Maspero, pp. 452, ff.

the householder being responsible for his family; the white-beard or sheik for ten householders; the head of a sub-clan for every ten or twelve sheiks; a malik for a certain number of these under-chiefs; a prince elected by these maliks ruling over all. If we may credit Herodotus,[1] these various systems were superseded by monarchy, through the influence of one Deioces, towards the close of the 8th century before Christ, and his throne, it is said, passed quietly to his son Phraortes, who forthwith began, like the kings around, to make war on his neighbours. Having first subdued Persia, he next turned to Armenia, which the kings of Assyria had often before invaded, and now claimed as their own. Brought thus into collision with the rulers of Nineveh, Phraortes was beaten and killed in a great battle, about the year B.C. 635.[2]

His authority, however, descended to Cyaxares, his son, a man of commanding military genius, fired with hatred of the Assyrian, and ambitious to found a vast empire. The rebellion of the brother of Assurbanipal, at Babylon, had shaken the power of the Great King to its foundations. His dominions were, henceforth, in danger on every side. Psammetichus had torn Egypt from him and was now besieging Ashdod. Babylon, under Nabopolassar, an Assyrian general appointed over the province, as a reward for having reconquered it after the great rebellion, had himself risen in revolt, and the Medes, under the dangerous leadership of Cyaxares, were descending the western slopes of the mountains to invade Assyria from the east. They were sweeping on to besiege Nineveh itself, when their progress was suddenly arrested by a strange and terrible phenomenon.[3]

[1] Herod., i. 102, ff. [2] Justi, *Gesch. des alten Persiens*, p. 11. Herod., i. 162.

[3] Ewald thinks that Nahum, supposed to have been a Jewish exile living at Elkosh on the Tigris, saw this invasion, and alludes to it. *Geschichte*, vol. iii. p. 743. The exact chronology of these events is very uncertain.

The vast steppes of Southern Russia and of Asia, shut off from the ancient civilization of India, Mesopotamia, Syria, and Asia Minor, by the great mountain chains of the Himalaya, the Hindoo-Kusch, Caucasus, and Taurus, had hitherto been nearly altogether unknown by antiquity. The wildest fables prevailed respecting the regions beyond this gigantic barrier. Suddenly, however, the mystery was at once, in part, intensified, in part, unveiled. A generation before, the Cimmerians had broken through, but had been driven back by Esarhaddon; but now, again, the southern passes of these awful heights swarmed with the hordes of a strange race, mounted on wiry steppe horses; foul and sordid in their personal habits; living mainly on mare's milk and the cheese made from it, with the occasional addition of horseflesh or other animal food, from vast herds which they brought with them. Their houses—huge tents of felt[1]—were carried with them on waggons, drawn by long files of oxen; and their wives and children accompanied the host. A vase found in a tomb[2] represents the men as wearing long hair and beards, with round or conical bonnets, generally reaching down the neck, close-fitting tunics with a belt round the waist, trousers tied round the ankles, and boots; their weapons, the bow, the spear, the short sword, and the battle axe; with only the shield for protection. From some of their words preserved in Herodotus,[3] they seem to have belonged to the Aryan family of nations rather than, as formerly thought, to the Mongolian, and, if so, they formed one of the earliest waves of the migrations of that race, in search of a new home. Since then the world has often been alarmed by similar inroads from the same regions—hordes

[1] Herod., iv. 46, 73.
[2] Given in Rawlinson's *Anct. Monarchies*, vol. ii. p. 511.
[3] Herod., iv. 58. So Grimm thinks.

of Gauls, Goths, Vandals, Parthians, Huns, Turks, and Tartars,[1] spreading dismay and ruin over the fairest regions of Asia or Europe. But their first sudden irruption on the civilization of the ancient world must have had all the intensity of an unprecedented calamity. It was believed that they drank the blood of their enemies slain in battle; used their skulls for drinking cups,[2] made their skin into a cover for their quivers, and worshipped no god but a naked sword.[3] Nothing is said of them in the meagre record of Kings and Chronicles, but the imagery of the prophets enables us to form some conception of the intense dread with which they were regarded over all Western Asia. The seething cauldron of the North was to spread smoke and flame over Palestine.[4] Its wild hosts, riding on horses, and armed with the bow and javelin, would be cruel and have no mercy. Their battle-shout would be like the roar of the sea.[5] Long after they had disappeared, the impression they had made on the general imagination is seen in the language in which Ezekiel anticipates future invasions from the same regions. Their coming was to be like that of a storm which swept the land assailed; like a cloud, from which were to burst innumerable horses and horsemen, with bucklers and helmets, swords and bows, clubs and spears; horde following horde, spreading dismay and ruin, which seemed to fill the world, in all its kingdoms, with terror. The very fish of the sea, the birds of the air, the creeping things of the earth, and all men upon it, would tremble at their presence; the mountains sink before them; the cliffs topple down. Their overthrow

[1] The word Tartar was originally Tatar. It was changed to its present form through the horror of the populations invaded, to whom such a race seemed the offspring of Tartarus—fiends from the underworld. Trench's *English Past and Present*, p. 184.

[2] Herod., iv. 64, 65.

[3] Herod., iv. 62.

[4] Jer. i. 13.

[5] Jer. vi. 23.

seemed to demand the forces not only of man, but nature; pestilence and blood, rain floods, hailstones, fire and brimstone conspiring to destroy them; till the deep gorges east of the Dead Sea were filled with their unclean dead, carried thither from the sacred limits of Israel, to sate the vultures and wild beasts of the hills, with the flesh of the mighty, and the blood of princes, and the carcases of chiefs and warriors.[1] In such language men spoke, in the days of Christ, of the similar hosts of the Parthians. St. John, in the Apocalypse, saw four destroying angels, hitherto bound in the river Euphrates, let loose to slay the third part of men. Two hundred thousand horsemen, in mail of fiery blue and brimstone, rode forth through the dried-up river bed, an army of hell, to destroy mankind.[2] Nor did the Roman historians use language less striking of these later counterparts of the "Scythians" of Josiah's day. Their accounts of the endless rushing swarms of wild cavalry; their terrible shouts, like the bellowing of beasts, and the hideous clamour of their countless drums, like the noise of thunder; their breastplates and helmets of steel, glittering like lightning; their horses covered with brass and steel trappings; the painted faces of the warriors, and their shaggy hair, gathered in a mass on their foreheads, in the Scythian fashion,[3] seem almost repetitions of the language of the prophets, and enable us to imagine the alarm of the populations on whom such a visitation first descended.

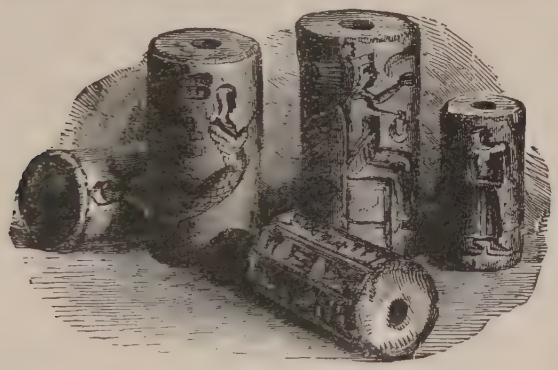
Media, comparatively safe in its wild uplands, escaped with a promise of tribute to the invaders. The cities of Nineveh and Babylon were too strong for a foe which had

[1] Ezek. xxxviii. and xxxix.

[2] Rev. ix. 14, ff. The dread of a Parthian invasion was then a tradition of a century before.

[3] Plut., *Vitæ* (*Crassus*), iii. 33.

not learned to besiege walled towns. But the open country, far and near, was laid waste. Horde after horde, passing over it, turned even the richest districts to deserts. Neither sex nor age was spared. Those who did not escape to the mountains or to some stronghold, were either slain or carried off as slaves. The crops were consumed; the herds killed or swept away; the villages burnt, and even some towns taken by sudden assault. The course of devastation



CLAY CYLINDERS, REPRESENTING VARIOUS GODS.

The second on the left represents the fish goddess Derceto, a local form of Ashtoreth, or Venus; the fish form being a symbol of productiveness.

passed on from Mesopotamia to Northern Syria and Phœnicia, including Damascus and Palestine. At last it reached the borders of Egypt, but its force was already spent, and Psammetichus was able to bribe the leaders, by rich gifts, to turn back. Retracing their steps, they pillaged the temple of Derceto, at Ascalon.[1] But their power for evil was now weakened. The losses in so many battles could not be repaired; success drew after it disputes and divisions, per-

[1] Herod., i. 105.

haps relaxed their energy. The city of Bethshean in Central Palestine, known in after ages as Scythopolis,[1] on the commercial and military route from Egypt to Nineveh, was soon the only spot where any number of them lingered. Once back again beyond the Tigris, Cyaxares is said to have invited their leading chiefs to a banquet, and murdered them while feasting, and to have ultimately succeeded in driving back the whole host to Upper Asia, after a fierce and prolonged war. Their domination had lasted, at most, seven or eight years, from about B.C. 634 to 627.[2]

Such a terrible visitation made a deep impression on the popular mind in Judah. Nineveh, though saved for the time, had shewn its growing weakness. All Western Asia had bowed the head before the scourge of God. The gods of the nations had not been able to save them. On their way across Palestine the barbarians had, perhaps, attempted to take Jerusalem, for this is hinted, in Ewald's opinion, in the fifty-ninth Psalm.[3] The country population must, at least, have flocked to the fancied security of the capital, from the walls of which pale crowds may have watched the flames and smoke of burning villages and towns. Amidst such universal alarm the faithful among the prophets were true to their lofty mission. They saw in this awful visitation the hand of the Almighty, stretched out to punish the idolatry and iniquity around, and earnestly called on their fellow-countrymen to repent. Nor can we doubt that their words fell, at such a time, with unusual weight on the ears

[1] Euseb., *Præp. Ev.*, ix. 39.

[2] De Saulcy, *Chronologie des empires de Ninivé, de Babylone et d'Ecbatāne*, p. 69. Rawlinson's *Great Monarchies*, vol. iii. pp. 178, 187. Lenormant, *Lettres assyriologiques*, 1ère serie, vol. i. pp. 74-83. Herod., i. 104, says that the Scythian rule lasted twenty-eight years, but this is certainly a mistake.

[3] *Geschichte*, vol. iii. p. 748.

of their hearers. The so-called Scythian invasion roused the nation from its long spiritual sleep, and, with the harangues of the prophets, kindled that zeal in king and people, for the restoration of the worship of Jehovah, which culminated soon after in a great religious Reformation.

CHAPTER VI.

THE PROPHETS NAHUM AND ZEPHANIAH.

NAHUM, c. B.C. 709 (Keil); c. B.C. 627 (Hitzig and Steiner); c. B.C. 660 (Schrader); c. B.C. 630 (Ewald); c. B.C. 650 (Kleinert); c. B.C. 626 (Eichhorn).
ZEPHANIAH, B.C. 630–619 (Schrader); "under Josiah" (Robertson Smith).
TIRHAKAH died in B.C. 664.
ASSURBANIPAL died in B.C. 620.
NINEVEH fell in from B.C. 609–606 (Schrader); B.C. 605 (Kleinert).

OF the various prophets in the earlier years of Josiah, the names of only a few have survived. Among these Nahum, "consolation," chose for his theme, in the brief writing which bears his name, the doom of Nineveh, the great oppressor of the nations, which was so clearly tottering to its fall. His home, Elkosh, has been placed by some in the Christian village of Alkusch, two days' journey from the site of ancient Nineveh, on the east bank of the Tigris, whither, it is supposed, he had been carried off, perhaps at the same time as Manasseh, and where a spot is still shewn as his grave.[1] A Jewish tradition, recorded by Jerome,[2] claims, on the other hand, that he was a Galilean, of the village of Elkosh, which had been long in ruins when the Father visited it.[3] Capernaum, indeed, which may have been Elkosh, means the village of Nahum. But though it is not impossible that we may thus have a local memorial

[1] So Tuch, Ewald, Kleinert, and others. [2] Niebuhr, *Reisen*, vol. ii. p. 352.
[3] Prologue to *Comm. on Nahum*. Nöldeke, Keil and Steiner, think Nahum a Galilean, living in Galilee. Jerome calls the place Elkese.

of the prophet, it is apparently only a pleasing conjecture. Assyrian words occurring, as Ewald maintains, in the prophecy, seem to shew, in contradiction to Jerome's tradition, that we have in "Nahum" the voice of an exile of the Ten Tribes, himself a spectator of the march of the Medes under Cyaxares, against the great city.

In the imminent danger which thus threatened Assyria, Nahum, with the feelings of an ancient Jew, rightly saw the judgment of God on the fierce enemy of mankind, and the centre of heathen wickedness. His words glow with the hatred of a patriot, at the foe which had carried off his fellow-countrymen into distant banishment, and desolated his native land. His abhorrence at the wickedness of the great city is only equalled by his exultation at its fall, as the enemy of Jehovah, of Israel, and of the human race. The lion's den is at last to be invaded. All the world claps its hands for joy, when the storm of Divine wrath has finally swept away the great destroyer of nations.

This magnificent song of triumph over the fall of the Assyrian capital is strangely interesting, as, it may be, the last echo of prophecy heard from any survivor of the Ten Tribes. Nor is it without a grand moral fitness that a lonely exile, one of the innumerable victims of her tyranny, should be the solitary voice that made known to future ages her irrevocable doom.

Filled with a sense of the greatness of God in crushing the once mighty empire, the prophet, as becomes a Jew, opens with a recognition of His supreme majesty and power, as the ruler of the world.

"I. 2. Jehovah[1] is a jealous and revenging God; Jehovah revenges, and pours out His wrath; He will take vengeance on His adversaries,

[1] Nahum i. 1-9.

and keep alive His wrath against His foes. 3. Jehovah, though slow to anger, is of great power, and will by no means acquit the wicked. Jehovah has His way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of His feet.

"4. He rebukes the sea, and makes it dry (with the glow of His wrath), and dryeth up all the rivers; Bashan and Carmel wither, and the verdure of Lebanon fades. 5. The mountains tremble[1] before Him; the hills melt (for terror), and the earth springs back from His presence; the earth, with all that is on it. 6. Who can stand before His indignation? Who can abide the fierceness of His anger? His wrath pours down like (a rain of) fire, and the rocks are rent asunder before Him!"

But the Divine anger passes over those who are faithful to Him, and burns only against His adversaries. This introduces the announcement of His determination to take vengeance on Nineveh.

"7. Jehovah is good; a stronghold in the day of trouble, and He knoweth them that trust in Him. 8. But He will utterly sweep away the very place (of Nineveh) as with an overwhelming flood; He will chase His enemies into (the) darkness (of Sheol)."

He now addresses Nineveh directly.

"9. What do you propose, by which to withstand Jehovah? (It will be idle.) He will make an utter end (of Nineveh). Judah need fear no further trouble from her![2]

"10. (Strong in numbers and in allies,[3] ye men of Nineveh,) ye may be joined close and terrible as matted thorns; ye may boast, in your drink, that no power can harm you—drunkards that you are[4]—yet, like thorns, the fiery wrath of Jehovah will devour you; like stubble fully dry.[5] 11. From thee went out he[6] that imagined evil against

[1] Ewald and Kleinert have "groan."

[2] Ewald renders these words, "There will be no need to repeat the blow on Nineveh a second time." So, also, in ver. 12, ff. Steiner and Hitzig agree with this.

[3] Nahum i. 10–14.

[4] This passage is thought by Gesenius to mean that they would be cut down while marching in close phalanx, and intoxicated to reeling. *Lex.*, p. 708.

[5] On this passage see Gesenius, *Lex.*, p. 708, under the word Saba.

[6] The various kings of Assyria typified as Nimrod. Mic. v 6. Nöldeke thinks Sennacherib is referred to. So, Ewald.

Jehovah, a counsellor of Belial[1] (purposing the destruction of my people)! 12. But thus says Jehovah: 'Be (the armies of) Assyria and her allies ever so strong and so many, they will be swept away,[2] and he, My enemy, shall perish.' Though I have chastised thee (O Israel, through the Assyrians, in the past), thou wilt suffer from them no more.[3] 13. For now I will break his yoke from off thee, and will tear asunder thy bonds.[4]

"14. But respecting thee (O Nineveh), Jehovah has commanded that 'no more shall there be a posterity bearing thy name! I will destroy the graven image (of stone) and the molten image (of metal) from the house of thy god: and I will defile the site of thy ruined temples with dead men's bones[5] (by making these temples thy grave); for thou art (weighed in the balances and) found wanting.'"[6]

The vision of the siege of the great city now rises before the prophet, and messengers are speeding to the West, to announce to Judah the glad news that her oppressor has fallen.

"I. 15. See![7] (yonder) on thy mountains (O Judah, are) the feet of the messenger bringing thee the good tidings, proclaiming 'Peace (for the oppressor has fallen)!' Keep thy feasts (of thanksgiving); pay thy vows! for never more shall the Man of Wickedness invade thee; he is utterly destroyed!"

The army of the enemy now approaches Nineveh, and the prophet calls out in irony:

"II. 1. The Hammer of War[8]—(the Median king)—comes up against thee! Man thy defences! (Let thy warders) watch every approach!

[1] Belial is the word here used in the Hebrew Bible, but it was not used as a proper name till much later, though I have introduced it as such.

[2] Literally, "mowed down."

[3] Thus De Wette, Kleinert, Noyes, Keil. The Septuagint version of ver. 12 is strange: "Thus saith Jehovah, who rules over many waters, Even thus shall they be sent away, and the report of thee shall not be heard anywhere."

[4] Isa. x. 24–27.

[5] Lev. xxvi. 30. 2 Kings xxiii. 14. Jer. vii. 32; xix. 11. Ezek. vi. 5.

[6] See Dan. v. 27. On this passage consult Böttcher's *Aehrenlese*, vol. ii. p. 207. Gesenius renders it, "Thou art become small; thy power is broken." But this is clearly a misconception of the force of the words.

[7] Nahum i. 15; ii. 1-2.

[8] Mace, Maul; comp. the word, "*Maccabee*," or Charles *Martel*.

gird (the sword on) thy loins; muster all thy strength! 2. For Jehovah is about to restore the land of its (old) glory to (Judah)-Jacob, and to His own chosen Israel,[1] for the plunderers have spoiled it, (tearing off its boughs, the tribes)—and destroying its clusters (their fair communities)."

A description of the Median army prepared for battle, and a picture of the final catastrophe of Nineveh, follows.

"3. The shields of the (Median) heroes are painted (with the war colour) red.[2] Their valiant warriors are in scarlet;[3] the steel bosses and fittings of their chariots,[4] set in battle array, flash like fire, and their spear shafts of cypress quiver. 4. (Within Nineveh itself) the chariots rush madly through the streets; they rattle wildly (hither and thither), through the open spaces; they gleam (from their steel bosses); they flash swiftly (to this point and that), like the lightning. 5. The king (in the city) shall bethink him of his noted warriors (trusting to them), but their steps totter as they rush on (thus suddenly summoned to the defence, unprepared, as if waked from sleep). They hasten to the walls, but the testudo[5] has already been set up against them."

ASSYRIAN STANDARD. KHORSABAD.

But, now, the city is taken.

"6. The city gates (defended by broad canals from the Tigris) are burst open, and the palace is broken down

[1] De Wette. Kleinert. Keil. Ewald thinks Jacob is = Judah. So Eichhorn. Now that the Ten Tribes were gone, Judah takes the proud names of "Jacob" and "Israel."

[2] **Nahum ii. 3-5.** Perhaps the copper on the shields red with reflection—is meant. Jos., *Ant.*, XIII. xii. 5.

[3] Red was the favourite colour of the Medes. So also of the Babylonians. Ezek. xxiii. 14. Layard's *Nineveh*, p. 347. The Assyrian colour was blue. Ezek. xxiii. 6; xxvii. 24. Blood red was, indeed, the favourite colour for robes of battle, in antiquity. *Val. Max.*, ii. 6. *Ael. Var. Hist.*, vi. 6.

[4] Scythe chariots were first introduced by Cyrus.

[5] A strong cover, under protection of which the besiegers advanced to force a passage through the gates or to make a breach in the walls. It was either a tower

(and sinks into ruin).[1] 7. The queenly city is taken;[2] her veil torn off; and her maids moan for her with the (sad) voice of doves, as they beat their breasts. 8. As for Nineveh, her (abundant) waters (hitherto flowing in their channels) now spread over her like a wide sea, (the canal banks being cut). Her warriors flee. "Make a stand, make a stand" (cries their leader), but no one looks (round or turns) back!

"9. Take, ye (brave Medes), the spoil of silver, take the spoil of gold;[3] there is no end of the treasures, or of the costly booty of every kind. 10. There is nothing now but desolation, emptiness, ruin! The heart melts for terror: the knees smite together; the loins tremble, and the faces of all grow pale.

"11. Where is now (Nineveh), the den of lions—the feeding place of the young lions: where the lion, the lioness, and their whelps had their quarters, afraid of none? 12. Where is the lion that tore in pieces for his whelps, and killed for his lionesses, and filled his dens with prey, his lairs with ravin?

"13. Behold, I am against thee, saith Jehovah of Hosts, and I shall burn up thy chariots in smoke, and the sword shall devour thy young lions, and I shall free the earth, henceforth, from thy violence, and the threats of thy messengers shall be heard no more."

The theme of the prophet has now virtually been exhausted, but his emotion will not let him close. In the third chapter he begins it once more; as if again a spectator of the great catastrophe.

from which the assailants could reach the defenders of the wall, or a strong roof under which a battering ram was plied against the ramparts. Layard, p. 377.

[1] Gesenius. Kleinert. **Nahum ii. 6–13.**

[2] The word here used Hutzab occurs only in this place. Ewald, Hitzig, Steiner, and Eichhorn, think it the name of the chief queen. Others translate it as from a verb Natzab, "It is determined" by God. Thus Kleinert, and Keil.

[3] Gold mines seem formerly to have been worked in the Assyrian territory. Sardanapalus is said to have had 150 golden beds, and as many golden tables on his funeral pile, as well as vast numbers of gold and silver vases, and purple and many-coloured garments. The image of gold raised on the plain of Dura by Nebuchadnezzar was 60 cubits high and 6 broad (Dan. iii. 1). Xerxes carried off a golden image of Bel, at Babylon, 12 cubits in height. According to Diodorus the value of the gold taken from the temple of this god alone was equal to £21,000,000 of our money. Layard's *Nineveh*, vol. ii. pp. 416–17. When Ahasuerus feasted all the people in Shushan, the palace, wine was given them in vessels of gold, each different from the other. By "lions, lionesses," etc., is meant the cruel population and soldiery.

"III. 1. Woe to the city of blood![1] it is full of treachery and violence; it never ceases from harrying the nations!

"2. (Hark!) the cracking of whips! (hark!) the rattling of wheels! the gallop of horses,[2] the bounding of chariots! 3. cavalry rushing on with the flash of swords! (footmen) with glittering spears! heaps of slain! countless dead! they stumble over mounds of corpses!"

The cause of this appalling judgment is once more rehearsed. The deceitful friendship and crafty politics by which the rulers of Nineveh had inveigled nations to their ruin, as if by witchcraft, are compared to the arts of a harlot.[3] Perhaps, also, its seducing idolatry, which had spread far and near, by trade and otherwise, and had corrupted states, so as to make them an easy prey, may be included.[4]

"4. (This, all, has come,) because of the many whoredoms of the well-favoured harlot, skilled in (the) witchcraft (of secret intrigues and of baleful idolatry); who has sold (free) nations (into slavery) through her whoredoms, and kingdoms through her wicked arts.

"5. Behold! I am against thee, says Jehovah of Hosts; I will throw thy skirts over thy head, and shew the nations thy nakedness, and the kingdoms thy shame. 6. And I will throw abominable filth at thee, and dishonour thee, and make thee a gazing-stock. 7. And whoso sees thee will flee from thee and say: 'Nineveh is destroyed!' But who will bewail her? Where shall I find sympathizers with her (in her sorrow)?"

Nineveh may think itself strong and able to resist all attack; but what had been the fate of Thebes, at its hands, when Assurbanipal assailed it?

[1] **Nahum iii. 1-7.**

[2] Gesenius, "causing his horse to rear." The Assyrian cavalry were armed with swords and bows, or with swords and long spears. They wore short tunics, their legs and feet were bare, and they had originally no saddles, but sat with their knees almost on a level with the horse's back. An archer on horseback was attended by a comrade who rode at his side, and held his reins while he discharged his arrows. Layard's *Nineveh*, vol. ii. p. 357.

[3] Hitzig. Keil.

[4] Kleinert.

"III. 8. Art [1] thou better than No [2] (the city of Amon—the solar God)—enthroned on the Nile, amidst broad canals—girdled by waters—whose rampart round it was sea-like streams, forming its strong wall of defence? 9. The (valiant) Cush,[3] Egypt with its countless hosts,

[1] **Nahum iii. 8-19.**

[2] No = "the great city:" Brugsch, vol. i. p. 247. No-Amon = "Seat of Amon." His "inheritance," "possession:" Mühlau und Volck. "Dwelling of Amon:" Keil.

[3] Cush was the old Egyptian name for the region between the cataracts of the Nile and Abyssinia, and for the peoples, other than negroes, south of Egypt. It is thus nearly identical with the earlier use of the name Ethiopia by the Greeks. The dark tribes on both sides of the Arabian Gulf were, however, known as Ethiopians, and Herodotus even speaks of an Asiatic branch of the race. Indeed, in Homer, this name is applied to all the races and lands of the then known southern parts of the world; and, in the same way, Cush was a general term among the ancient Hebrews for the same countries and races (Gen. ii. 13.): for the peoples named in Genesis as sprung from Cush include dwellers in Southern Asia as well as in Africa (Gen. x. 7). But these continents, it must not be forgotten, were not as yet sharply discriminated, in the earliest times; for even Herodotus reckons Egypt as in Asia, though he feels the difficulty of such a division. Even as late as about Christ's day, geographers spoke of the "Cussites" of the territory of Susiana, beyond the Tigris and Euphrates, and there was a district called Cush in the Taurus Mountains, the peoples of which, as shewn by the Telloh pictures, were darker than the Semites, approaching black. The Accadians, on the contrary, were called "Adamatu," or red, by the Assyrians. Nimrod, moreover, a "son" of Cush, is handed down to us as the first king of Babel and the district round it. It may be, also, that the Mesopotamian king, Cushan Rishathaim, of the time of the Judges, marks the survival of a Cushite kingdom (Judg. iii. 8) in that region, to a comparatively modern date. There is still, moreover, a province of Persia, on the mouth of the Euphrates, bearing the significant name of Khuzistan.

In a narrower sense, Cush is used in the Bible, much as it was by the ancient Egyptians, for the region south of the cataracts of the Nile (Ezek. xxix. 10), including Kordofan, along with Abyssinia, the present Nubia, and part of Sennaar; in fact, much of the Soudan. This great stretch of country was, anciently, far less confused in its ethnography than it is to-day; for countless changes have produced a variety of mixed races, of mingled Cushite, Semitic, and negro origin. There are, however, no traces of this in early antiquity, for there is no mention, in the Old Testament, of Semitic races in these regions; though Herodotus, in the fifth century before Christ, speaks of Arabs, along with African Ethiopians, in the army of Xerxes (Herod., vii. 69). Nor is there any hint of the presence of the negro race; for even the Egyptian monuments shew a marked distinction between the Ethiopians, and the negroes on the west of their country. The Cushites, in fact, belonged to the Caucasian race. It is true that the Ethiopic language, in use through later ages, is essentially Semitic; but this may be explained from the Ethiopian races having mingled with Semitic ones in Arabia (Knobel, *Völkertafel*, p. 257), and adopted their language; as the Normans adopted the French, or as Latin became the language of many countries under the Romans. Indeed, there are still tribes undoubtedly representing the old Cushites, whose language is equally distinct from the Semitic of Abyssinia on the one hand, and from the negro languages on the other, and whose physical characteristics clearly distin-

Put,[1] and the Libyans were thy strength, (O Thebes!) 10. Yet, (in spite of all this,) she was carried off into exile and slavery: her little children were dashed in pieces against the walls of each street: they cast lots for all her nobles, (who should have them for slaves), and her great men were bound in chains! 11. Thou also (O Nineveh) wilt (drink the cup of the wrath of the Almighty, and) be drunken (with it)! Darkness will come over thine eyes;[2] thou too wilt seek a refuge from the enemy! 12. All thy fortresses are like fig trees with early figs: shake them and the figs fall into the mouth of the eater! 13. Behold! thy men are like women, (for terror); they will open the gates of the land to the foe; fire will devour thy gate bars.

"14. Draw water[3] (and store it up in preparation) for the siege: repair thy fortresses; work the clay, and tread the mortar (to make bricks for them); make ready the brick kilns, (and strengthen thy walls and towers!) 15. Yet fire will devour thee; the sword will destroy thee; it will eat thee up as the locust eats the leaves of the field, were ye innumerable as locusts, and countless as grasshoppers! 16. Thy traders—countless as the stars—(bringing untold wealth to thee,) and spreading themselves out like locusts to spoil, will flee away.[4] 17. Thy chosen warriors[5] are like locusts; thy vassals[6] like grasshoppers, which light on the hedges when it is cold, but, when the sun rises, flee away, and there is no sign where they have been.

"18. Thy (princes, the) shepherds (of thy empire) sleep, O king of Assyria; thy nobles slumber: thy people are scattered over the mountains, and no one gathers them. 19. Incurable is thy wound! mortal thy stroke! All who hear of thee clap their hands at thy fall! For on whom has not thy wickedness gone forth continually?"[7]

guish them from both. The typical African generally, in fact, is very different from the negro, whose peculiarities were apparently first due to local influences and social degeneracy.

[1] See p. 79.

[2] Gesenius, Keil, Kleinert, "be covered with darkness, and forgotten." Ewald, as in the text.

[3] Access to the Tigris might be cut off.

[4] Ewald understands this passage to mean, that they will be like the locusts, which spread themselves out while yet without wings, but suddenly unfold them and fly away.

[5] An Assyrian word rendered "Princes" by some; as in the text by others. Böttcher's *Aehrenlese* understands the word as meaning "Thy levies of foot-soldiers" (vol. ii. pp. 208–9).

[6] An Accadian word, literally, Scribes: Fried. Delitzsch. Lenormant says it is an Assyrian official title: Steiner leaves it unexplained. I have given the rendering of Böttcher and Mühlau, *Aehrenlese*, vol. ii. p. 210.

[7] The historical notices of the destruction of Nineveh will be given in their proper place.

While Nahum, far from Jerusalem, was thus chanting his grand death-song of Nineveh, another prophet—Zephaniah—was seeking to rouse the Jewish capital from spiritual sleep, and bring it back to its ancient faith. The awful lessons of the Scythian invasion, and the warnings of the prophets, had already produced some effect; for a beginning, at least, had been made of the reforms which Josiah, during the next few years, was to carry out so thoroughly. The young king himself feared Jehovah, but his nearest relations and courtiers were the strength of the heathen party. The Law, though known, was systematically neglected or violated.[1] The worship of Jehovah was now restored; but Baal, and Moloch, and the Host of Heaven, were more esteemed.[2] The idols still boasted their priests and services;[3] the prophets were largely apostate.[4] The people had almost lost the idea of religion, and indifference largely prevailed even where there was not active idolatry. The great thought of the community was gain; it was no advantage, men urged, to serve Jehovah, and they therefore thought nothing of Him.

Zephaniah seems to have been the great-grandson of King Hezekiah,[5] and as such must have spoken with special weight.[6] Threatening mingles with appeal, exhortation, and promise, but the evil of the times makes the threats most prominent. The great day of judgment from Jehovah for the sins of Jerusalem is coming upon her, but the nation

[1] Zeph. iii. 3. [2] Zeph. i. 4. Jer. vi. 20; vii. 17.
[3] Zeph. i. 7. [4] Zeph. iii. 4. Jer. v. 13. [5] Zeph. i. 1.
[6] Zephaniah is stated to have prophesied in the days of Josiah. Schrader thinks he did so in the period between B.C. 630–617. The *Dict. of the Bible* says B.C. 630. Josiah had reigned twelve years before the cleansing of the land from idolatry commenced, and it lasted till his 18th year. 2 Chron. xxxiv. 3, 8. Zephaniah was thus strictly a contemporary of Jeremiah, who began to prophesy in the 13th year of Josiah. Jer. i. 2.

to be used as His instrument is not named, though, as in all the other prophets since Joel,[1] it is announced as coming on the city from the north, its weakest side. We must imagine a crowd listening while the prophet thus addresses them.

"I. 2. I will utterly[2] sweep away everything from the face of the land, says Jehovah. 3. I will sweep away man and cattle:[3] I will sweep away the birds of the heavens and the fish of the sea, and the idols[4] with (their worshippers), the wicked! And I will destroy man from off the land, says Jehovah! 4. And I will stretch out my hand against Judah, and against all the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And I will destroy from this place (Jerusalem) what yet remains of Baal worship[5] and root out the (black-robed) Chemarim (appointed by the kings of Judah for the service of the high places, and for the corrupted worship of Jehovah),[6] and the (special) idol-priests—(I will root them out) so that their very name will perish. 5. And (I will root out) them that bow down to the host of heaven upon the housetops; them also that bow down to Jehovah and swear by Him, while also swearing by Molech, their king (of heaven): 6. the ungodly also who have drawn back from Jehovah, and do not seek Him, or trouble themselves respecting Him."

The day of God's visitation approaches.

"7. Hush ye![7] before the Lord Jehovah! for the day of Jehovah is near: for Jehovah has prepared a sacrifice—(the people of Judah); He has set apart those called to the feast—(the nations appointed to consume her)!

"8. And it shall be in the day of Jehovah's sacrifice, that I (Jehovah) will punish the princes and the kings' sons,[8] and all others who wear costly foreign dress.[9] 9. In that day, also, I will punish every

[1] Joel ii. 20. [2] **Zeph. i. 2-6.** [3] Hos. iv. 3.

[4] Machshailoth—"what cause a state or a soul to fall"—hence in A.V. "stumbling blocks;" margin, "idols."

[5] The reforms of Josiah had begun. [6] 2 Kings xxiii. 5. Hos. x. 5.

[7] **Zeph. i. 7-9.** 'Malcham' in verse 6 = 'their Melech,' *i.e.*, king (of heaven)—Moloch, or, rather, Molech.

[8] The sons of Manasseh or Amon—uncles or brothers of Josiah—their whole circle is included.

[9] Some probably affected Egyptian fashion; others Assyrian; always costly, often idolatrous, in its ornaments; an index, moreover, of hearts alienated from the national manners, and of the loss of national spirit, political or religious. Egyptian dress, besides, was expressly forbidden by the Law. Lev. xix. 19.

one who leaps over the threshold:[1] and those who fill their master's house with violence and treachery![2]

"10. In that day,[3] there shall rise, says Jehovah, a cry from the Fish gate (on the north-east of the city), and a loud wail from the lower town, and an echoing crash from the hills (around, as the enemy forces his way into and through the city). 11. Howl! ye inhabitants of Maktesh—"the hollow"[4]—(the foreign trader's quarter of Jerusalem in the Tyropœon valley, west of the temple); for all the Canaanites[5]—(that is, the traffickers of the town)—are silenced in death; all that are laden with silver (for buying or selling). 12. And at that time I will search through Jerusalem with lamps, and punish them who sit (with their feet drawn up under them, still and untroubled), like wine left on its lees: who say in their heart, ('There is no use heeding the prophets)—Jehovah has nothing to do with either (the) good or (the) evil (one meets: it all happens by chance!)' 13. Their goods will be plundered; their houses made a desolation; they build houses, but shall not live in them; they plant vineyards, but shall not drink of the wine!

"14. The great day of Jehovah is near: near, and coming very swiftly, the thunder of the day of Jehovah! Bitterly will even the mighty man of war cry out then! 15. That day will be a day of wrath! a day of sore trouble and distress! a day of ruin and desolation! a day of gloom and darkness! a day of clouds, and black night! 16. a day of trumpet peals and shrill blasts, against the walled towns and their high towers! 17. And I will bring distress on men so that they shall walk as if blind (finding no way out of the danger), because they have sinned against Jehovah: and their blood shall be poured out as

[1] The words of this clause are understood by some (Kleinert) to refer to the Philistine custom of leaping over the threshold of the temple of Dagon (1 Sam. v. 5); by Hitzig, to superstitious leaping over the threshold of the palace, as sacred—a Persian usage to this day. Others, as Ewald, Rosenmüller, Keil, and Calvin, suppose it refers to a violent, sudden entrance into houses, for purposes of robbery. See the next clause. On the narrow basis of this very doubtful phrase, "scientific criticism" (*Bible in Jewish Church*, p. 250) actually builds up the theory that the temple was guarded by a foreign watch during the time of the kings, and that thus the "principles of Levitical sanctity were never recognized or enforced under the first temple!" It really creates, out of the few words of the text, a military corps bearing the "familiar characters of Oriental Janissaries!"

[2] The rich in the East—that is, the gentlemen and courtiers—are largely traders, and their position, under lawless despotisms, has in all ages tempted them, too often, to exactions and injustice. The other traders in the community were largely foreigners (ver. 11).

[3] **Zeph. i. 10–18.** [4] Or "mortar." [5] Zech. xiv. 21.

(no more worth than the) dust (of the street); and their corpses (trodden under foot) like mire. 18. Neither their silver nor their gold will be able to save them in the day of Jehovah's wrath; the whole land will be consumed by the fire of God's indignation; for death, ay, a terrible death, will He mete out to all the dwellers in the land!"

Having thus delivered his awful "burden," the prophet breaks off into an earnest exhortation to all, to turn to Jehovah and save themselves. He enforces his counsels by painting the judgments impending over the heathen kingdoms around, naming one in each quarter of the heavens, west, east, north, and south, to shew how far-reaching and overwhelming will be the doom of God's enemies.

"II. 1. Bow yourselves in penitence,[1] bow yourselves,[2] O people, hitherto stout-hearted and undismayed (at the threatenings of Jehovah[3])— 2. before the Divine decree is carried out; the brief delay passes like chaff (before the wind)! Before the burning anger of Jehovah comes upon you, before the day of the wrath of Jehovah breaks over you, 3. seek ye Jehovah, all ye meek of the land, who have obeyed His law; seek righteousness, seek meekness, that ye may be hidden (from the storm) in the day of the wrath of Jehovah!

"4. For GAZA[4] shall be forsaken, and ASCALON will be blotted out; the people of ASHDOD will be driven out of it in the broad day (when men rest, and danger is least feared); and EKRON shall be razed to the ground. 5. Woe to the inhabitants of the sea-coast, the nation of the Crethi.[5] This is the word of Jehovah concerning you, O Canaan,[6] the land of the Philistines. I will destroy thee till I empty thee of inhabitants, 6. and the sea-coast, (now so populous,) shall be rude homes for

[1] **Zeph. ii. 1-7.**

[2] Kleinert. Literally, "collect yourselves, your thoughts; consider, examine yourselves." The idea is taken from gathering stubble. Böttcher paraphrases it: "put your thoughts together to repent, and thus save yourselves from the fire of God's wrath, which threatens to consume you like stubble."

[3] Literally, "people whose faces have not grown pale."

[4] Philistia was west of Judah.

[5] See vol. iii. pp. 113, 255, 434. They were a branch of the Philistines.

[6] Philistia is here called Canaan, from its being devoted, like Phœnicia, to commerce, and from its being only a continuation of the Phœnician or Canaanite sea-plain. See Num. xiii. 29. Wilton, *The Negeb*, pp. 21, 245.

shepherds, and folds[1] for flocks. 7. Then will the coast become the portion of the remnant of the House of Judah, and they will pasture (their flocks and herds) on it, camping in the deserted ruins of ASCALON by night. For Jehovah their God will visit His people, and bring them back from captivity.[2]

"8. I have heard[3] the scornful taunting of MOAB,[4] and the revilings of the B'NAI AMMON, who have spoken contemptuously of My people, and have haughtily invaded its borders.[5] 9. Therefore, as I live, says Jehovah of Hosts, the God of Israel, Moab shall assuredly be like Sodom, and the B'nai Ammon like Gomorrah—a possession of nettles, and a place of salt pits,[6] and a perpetual desolation. The remnant of My people will plunder them and hold them as slaves.[7] 10. This will be their lot for their pride, because they insulted the people of Jehovah of Hosts, and acted haughtily against them.

"11. Fearful is Jehovah in His judgments upon them! For He will destroy all the gods of the earth, and men shall worship Him, every one from his place, even from the (far-off) coasts and islands of the heathen!

"12. Even you, ye CUSHITES, in the far south, the slain of My sword will ye be!

"13. And, (as in the South, so), Jehovah will stretch out His hand against the North, and destroy Assyria, and make Nineveh a desolation —a parched wilderness! 14. troops of wild beasts of all kinds shall lie down in the midst of her; the pelican and the bittern[8] shall lodge on

[1] The word is the plural of "gedairah," the same word as "jedar," which is still the name in Palestine for the dry-stone enclosures used for walls of orchards, sheep-folds, etc. They are built of stones of all sizes, laid as compactly as possible together, to the height of from four to six feet, though at times higher; the bottom broad, to support the superstructure.

[2] To avoid an acknowledgment of a strictly prophetical element in Scripture, Kuenen translates this, "restore them to prosperity."

[3] **Zeph. ii. 8–15.** [4] Moab lay east of Judah.

[5] Since the deportation of Israel, Moab and Ammon had virtually taken possession of the territories east of Jordan. Jer. xlviii., xlix. They were always striving, moreover, to encroach on the Hebrews—Amos i. 13; Isa. xv. 4—and for a length of time invaded them each year. 2 Kings xiii. 20. In fact, since the reign of David, there had been the fiercest hatred between the two peoples, though they were related by blood.

[6] The district at the south of the Dead Sea is a wide bed of rock salt, which rises in huge masses, and is quarried out as an object of trade.

[7] This seems the meaning of the phrase, "shall possess them," or "have them for an inheritance."

[8] Kleinert, Ewald, Eichhorn, Keil, Noyes, and De Wette, translate this word as "hedgehog." Dr. Sachs renders it "frogs." Hitzig suggests "the owl" or "bittern." Tristram says, "the hedgehog or porcupine never resort to marshy places,

the tops[1] of her pillars; their cry shall sound through the window or broken wall;[2] the threshold (trodden now by so many) will be desolate; for Jehovah has laid bare and torn down the carvings of cedar![3]

"15. This is the joyful city, that dwelt in careless security, that said in her heart, 'I stand by myself, and have no rival;' how has she become a desolation, a place for beasts to lie down in! Every one that passes by her shall hiss, and wave his hand for joy!"[4]

The prophet now turns from recounting God's judgments on the heathen nations, to renew his exhortation to Jerusalem to repent, and escape similar judgments.

"III. 1. Woe to thee, O stiff-necked,[5] polluted; O city of violence! 2. which listens to no (warning) voice (of its prophets), which receives not admonition; does not trust in Jehovah; does not draw near to God. 3. Her head men within her are roaring lions (devouring the weak and poor); her judges are (insatiable as) evening wolves (eager and fierce after prey in the darkness, and) leaving nothing (of it) till morning. 4. Her prophets are vain talkers and deceivers; her priests profane the temple and violate the Law. 5. Jehovah is just, in the midst of her. He does no unrighteousness; morning by morning, continually, He makes known His impending judgments, but the unrighteous (city) knows no shame. 6. (He tells them,) 'I have destroyed nations who sinned against Me; laid their strongholds desolate; made their streets silent, none passing over them; desolated their cities till they are without a man, without an inhabitant! 7. I said in my heart, "Surely thou (Jerusalem) wilt now fear Me and receive admonition, that thy dwelling (Mount Zion) should not be destroyed, as I had determined against thee?" But they have only more eagerly increased their shameful deeds.'"

nor are they characteristic of ruins. The bittern is far more probably the creature intended by the prophet. It is very abundant in the reedy marshes of the Tigris close by Nineveh."

[1] Their capitals, or chapiters.

[2] Hallōn is a window or opening for light, but it may well mean here a rent in the wall.

[3] See Mühlau und Volck. See also Hitzig. Böttcher translates this: "Lord Jehovah will utterly destroy it, or lay it bare," referring the words to "the threshold." Layard thinks that the Assyrian palaces were only panelled or wainscoted with cedar, which was very costly.

[4] On the fulfilment of prophecy in the case of Nineveh, see Layard's *Nineveh*, vol. i. p. 71.

[5] **Zeph. iii. 1-9.**

Counsel and warning being thus in vain, Jehovah will surely execute His threatenings, not on Jerusalem only, but on other nations also. He will not, however, forget His faithful ones. His truth will one day triumph over the world, and those who trust in Him may rejoice in this anticipation!

"8. Therefore, wait ye on Me (ye meek), saith Jehovah, till the day when I rise up to judgment. For it is My will [1] to gather together the nations, and assemble the kingdoms, and pour on them My indignation—all My fierce anger! For all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of My jealousy!

"9. This over, I shall give to the peoples a pure lip[2] (removing the uncleanness of lips hitherto polluted by the names of false gods), that they may all call on the name of Jehovah, and serve Him with one consent.[3] 10. From beyond the rivers of Cush (in the farthest south) will they bring as an offering to Me, My worshippers, the sons of My dispersed.[4] 11. In that day thou shalt no longer (need to) be ashamed for doings like those in which thou hast sinned against me (in the past); for I will remove from thy midst all thy proud boasters, and thou wilt no longer carry thyself haughtily towards Me on My holy hill. 12. For I will leave in thy midst only a people humble and meek,[5] who trust in the name of Jehovah. 13. This remnant of Israel will not do wrong or speak lies, and a deceitful tongue will not be found in their mouth, but (as the flock of Jehovah)[6] they will feed and rest, and no one will make them afraid.

"14. Rejoice, O daughter of Zion;[7] shout for joy, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all thy heart, O daughter of Jerusalem! 15. Jehovah has taken away the judgments (under which thou hast suffered): He has removed thy enemy far from thee; Jehovah, the king of Israel, is in the midst of thee; thou shalt see evil no more! 16. In that day it will be said to Jerusalem, 'Fear not;' and to Zion,

[1] "Till My time has come." Böttcher, vol. ii. p. 212.

[2] See Isa. vi. 5-7. Jer. i. 9. Dan. x. 16.

[3] Literally, "shoulder."

[4] Literally, "the daughter of." Ewald translates the verse: "From the banks of the rivers of Cush will they bring My incense; the daughter of Put will bring Me My gift." The word rendered "suppliant" or "worshipper" means also "incense." The word "dispersed" is "putzai," for which Ewald reads "Put," the country west of (Libya).

[5] = Godly.

[6] Mic. iv. 4; vii. 14. Luke xii. 32.

[7] Zeph. iii. 10-20.

'Let not thy hands fall down in alarm.' 17. Jehovah, thy God, is in thy midst, a Mighty One who will save thee; He will rejoice over thee with joy; He will give Himself up to the silent fulness of His love;[1] He will joy over thee with singing. 18. Those who sigh (in exile, afar off) for (the joyful assemblage at) the sacred feasts,[2] I will gather (from their dispersion); for they also are of Israel, and the shame of slavery still rests upon them.[3] 19. Behold, I will deal with all thine oppressors at that time, and I will deliver even the helpless lame, and will gather those that were driven out from this land, and will make them be honoured, and give them a name in all the lands where they have been put to shame. 20. At that time I will bring you back again (hither), and gather you, for I will give you a name and honour among all the peoples of the earth, when I bring back your ransomed captives before your eyes, says Jehovah."

A phenomenon, surely, preaching like this, unexampled in the history of any people or age! Imagine an orator at St. Paul's, not in our own happy days, but in the Sodom and Gomorrah times of the last Stuarts, or of the Regency, denouncing the royal family as roaring and devouring lions; the judges as insatiable wolves; the clergy as mere talkers and deceivers, and as polluting the temple and violating the law of God![4] Imagine a preacher, even now, who feared only God, and spoke accordingly! Fancy him declaring that the Divine judgments for the wickedness of all classes, high and low, would sweep over the land like a destroying flood, unless all alike repented! Dean Colet before the Reformation, and Latimer and John Knox in its hours of struggle, are perhaps the only parallels in our

[1] "Will renew the joy of His early love." Ewald, in effect. The meaning in the text seems more correct, though the Hebrew is amplified to make the sense clearer.

[2] Especially that of the Tabernacles, the most gladsome of all. Hos. xii. 10.

[3] De Wette translates: "Far from thee shall be the shame which is thy burden." Eichhorn: "And woe to those who would load thee with shame." Ewald: "Thou land on which they cast reproach." Sachs: "From them who mourn for the place of festal gathering will I take away the reproach borne by thee on their account, at their being thus far from thee (in exile)."

[4] See Zeph. iii. 3, 4.

history. Enthusiasm is not in favour in our day. To speak boldly for God is vulgar. Satan, as an established institution among us, should be treated handsomely.

But this fearless courage, standing up for God in the face of power, officialism, and vested interests, was not the only striking characteristic of the preaching of the prophets. The national outlook was of the blackest; deportation of the people at large to a foreign country, after the horrors of invasion, was accepted as certain. Yet faith in the promises of God to His chosen race never wavered. It was held certain, on the strength of His word, that He would bring them back from exile, and restore the throne of David. Such faith in the imperishableness of the nation, notwithstanding the ruin which was to overwhelm the then living generation; such faith in the future triumph of true religion, speaks of convictions far higher and nobler than mere political shrewdness or human sagacity.[1] Nor is it less wonderful that the preacher should speak with absolute confidence in a restoration from captivity, itself a generation distant—a restoration which was not effected till fully a hundred years after the speaker's death. What less than inspiration, in its strictest sense, can account for predictions so circumstantial, and so exactly verified?

[1] Vilmar, E., *Der Beweis des Glaubens*, p. 38. 1869.

CHAPTER VII.

THE EARLY PREACHING OF JEREMIAH.

About the same time as Zephaniah appeared, another prophet, destined to take a foremost place in the illustrious roll-call of his order, was coming into notice, though still young. It was Jeremiah.[1] Like Ezekiel, the son of a priest, he was born at Anathoth,[2] a small village on the main road,[3] about three miles north of Jerusalem, in the tribe of Benjamin.[4] It lay on a gentle height overlooking the upland plains, amidst a landscape which must have kindled the eye and roused the heart of the future prophet. The famous hills of Benjamin—Nob, Gibea of Saul—Mizpeh—Gibeon, Ramah, and Geba, rose in a half circle, to the west and north-west, at different points, nearer or farther off. To the east he could see, from the flat roof of his father's house, the chasm and plains of the Jordan, with the uplands high beyond. On the south-east, at the feet of the purple hills of Moab, lay the blue waters of the sea of Lot,[5]

[1] Jeremiah = Jehovah rejects—Klein. Jehovah establishes Dietrich. See for a full notice of the name, Herzog, *R. E.*, vol. vi. p. 478.

[2] Jer. i., xxix. 27. Anathoth is from the Assyrian god Ana, "the sky." It became Anu among the Semites, and as such Baal Samaim "Lord of heaven"—the whole expanse illuminated by the sun. As such it was early worshipped in Palestine. Thothmes III., in the sixteenth century B.C., mentions a town, Beth-Anath, "the temple of Anat" the female counterpart of Anu. There was another Beth-Anath in Naphtali (Josh. xix. 38), and Anathoth shews that the Canaanites worshipped their local goddesses under the name of Anats as well as of Ashteroth and Astarte. It was a city of priests. Anah or Anat was the Hivite mother in-law Esau (Gen. xxxvi. 1, 14), and Zibeon's son Anah or Anu is mentioned in ver. 24. Sayce's *Hibbert Lecture*, 188.

[3] Isa. x. 30. [4] Josh. xxi. 18. 1 Kings ii. 26. 1 Chron. vi. 45. Neh. xi. 32.

[5] The name for the Dead Sea among the Bedouins of the present day.

while towards the north, close to the village, a green valley reached away to the lofty northern side of the present Wady Sulem.

The testimony of Jeremiah corroborates the dark picture given by Zephaniah, of the moral and religious condition of Judah, when he began his ministrations. For more than seventy-five years, Assyria had given but little trouble, for the campaigns of Esarhaddon and Assurbanipal, against Phœnicia and Egypt, were only brief episodes in the long peace, and Manasseh, though for a time treated harshly, had been restored to his throne. Egypt under Psammetichus I. did not molest the Hebrews, the siege of Ashdod occupying her, as we have seen, for twenty-nine years. Judah was now rich and prosperous, but heathenism and moral corruption flourished in proportion. Josiah had been thirteen years on the throne when Jeremiah, in B.C. 627, received his Divine commission as prophet, but the gods of Judah were still as numerous as her cities,[1] and impiety was so rampant that it seemed vain to look for an upright or honest man ;[2] small and great were bent only on making money ; prophet and priest used deceit.[3]

Gentle, sensitive, and yielding, Jeremiah seemed ill-fitted for the office of a true prophet in such times. It offered only the most uninviting and dangerous prospect. He might count on bitter mockery and insult.[4] Though urged to even the harshest parts of his duty, by the sincerest patriotism and love for his fellow-countrymen, he was certain to meet with such misapprehension and contradiction, that the loneliest wilderness would seem a relief, in its quiet and security.[5] Yearning for peace and love ; averse by nature

[1] Jer. ii. 28 ; xi. 13. [2] Jer. v. 1–5. [3] Jer. vi. 13.
[4] Jer. xx. 7. [5] Jer. ix. 2.

from strife and controversy; fidelity to his mission would evidently force him to stand up as the accuser of his neighbours as a whole, and make him a second Ishmael—himself against every one, and every one against him. Nor could he fail to see that, like his predecessors, he would appear a public enemy and traitor to many, by having to denounce political measures on which they had set their hearts; such as the alliance with Egypt, in opposition to Assyria.[1] But, with the full consciousness that acceptance of the prophetic office implied all this and more—the clouding his life by abiding troubles, the loss of all that most men count gain, the imminent risk of martyrdom crowning a career of humiliation and bitterness—his sense of duty impelled him to brave whatever it might bring, when the voice of his Heavenly Master summoned him to His service.

Like Isaiah,[2] he has left us an account of his consecration to his high dignity. It took place, we know not under what circumstances, or where, in the thirteenth year of Josiah, while the prophet was still a very young man;[3] its every detail stamping itself on his memory with a vividness, fresh as ever, even in long subsequent years, when his authority to speak for Jehovah had been vindicated by the fulfilment of his gloomiest predictions of the fate of Jerusalem, and of the deportation of his race.[4] The word of Jehovah, he tells us, came to him—doubtless in a vision, the result of high mental excitement and preoccupation with the spiritual interests of his people—and seemed to say to him, in the silence of his bosom, as if with articulate words:

"Before I formed thee in the womb[5] I knew thee, and before thou camest into the world I consecrated thee, and

[1] Hengstenberg's *Christology*, vol. ii. p. 370. [2] Isa. vi.
[3] Jer. i. 6. [4] Jer. i. 3. [5] Jer. i. 4-13.

destined thee for a prophet to the nations." There must have been a spiritual fitness in the young man to make such an intimation to him possible; an intense sympathy with the old religion, and an all-mastering enthusiasm for its revival. It must, indeed, have become the engrossing thought of his heart to rouse his country to loyalty to Jehovah, and to warn them of the terrible danger and wickedness of their idolatry, and disobedience to the moral law given them from heaven. But he was still young, and shrank from the open assumption of an office so weighty as that of a prophet, though already one in his heart. "Alas, O Lord Jehovah," said he, "I know not how to speak; I am too young." But strength was to be made perfect in weakness. "Say not, 'I am too young,'" replied the Voice: "for thou shalt go to all to whom I shall send thee, and thou shalt say all that I command thee. Be not afraid of them; for I am with thee, to deliver thee, says Jehovah."

Then it appeared in the vision as if Jehovah put forth His hand, and touched his lips,[1] saying as He did so: "See, I have put My words in thy mouth. Behold, I this day appoint thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to tear down: to destroy and to overthrow; to build up, and plant."[2] He might still, however, have hesitated, in his humility; assurances, therefore, were added that he would not be left unsupported by God. A shoot of an almond tree—known by the Hebrews as "the waker," from being the earliest of all trees to *wake* from the sleep of winter—as if it had *watched* for spring—rose before him. "So," said Jehovah, "shall I be *wakeful* and *watchful* over My word, to carry it out." A boiling pot, its steam

[1] Isa. vi. 7.

[2] The evil was to be destroyed; the good, taking its place, to be planted and built up.

and smoke blowing southwards from the north, then appeared, and forthwith the Divine Voice continued:

"I. 14. Out of the North[1] evil will flame forth[2] upon all the inhabitants of this land. 15. For I am about to call (hither) all the races of the northern kingdoms; and they shall come, and raise, each, his throne, at the entrance of the gates of Jerusalem, and against all her walls, round about, and against all the towns of Judah. 16. And then will I deliver my sentence upon them for all their wickedness, because they have forsaken Me, and burnt incense to foreign gods, and paid homage to the works of their own hands.

"17. Now, therefore, gird thy loins (as a man does when he braces himself to action),[3] and stand up, and speak to them all that I command thee: be not dismayed before them, lest I make thee so indeed. 18. But I, even I, make thee to-day (strong) as a fortress-town, or as an iron pillar, or as walls of brass, against the whole land, its kings, its princes, its priests, and its people. They 19. shall indeed fight against you, but they will not overcome you; for I am with you, says Jehovah, to deliver you."

From this time, through forty years, most of them years of national misfortune, gradually darkening into utter ruin and exile, the recollection of this solemn "call" dwelt with the prophet as a constant summons to fidelity in his high office, and an encouragement and support amidst all its trials. During that long ministry, carried on chiefly in Jerusalem, no personal danger, no consideration of personal interest, comfort, or ease, no shrinking from ridicule, contumely, or hatred, could turn him from the task imposed on him with such awful sanctions, by the lips of the Eternal Himself. His tender and sensitive nature might for the moment shrink from the mortifications and perils of his commission, but the Divine command, as he tells us, glowed like a burning fire in his heart, and he could not be silent.[4] Wherever he could meet his fellows, his voice was lifted up

[1] Jer. i. 14-19. [2] Septuagint. [3] Ps. xix. 5. [4] Jer. xx. 9.

for his Master—in the courts of the temple,[1] at the gates of the city,[2] in the king's palace,[3] in prison,[4] in private houses,[5] in the open country around Jerusalem ;[6] anywhere, indeed, as circumstances demanded, or opportunity offered.

The earliest of his utterances which has come down to us dates, apparently, from the first year of his commission, B.C. 627 : the thirteenth year of Josiah. It is an earnest denunciation of his fellow-countrymen for their refusal to keep aloof from Egypt and Assyria, and follow the prophets alone, as messengers of Jehovah. Political factions in Jerusalem demanded alliance with one or other of the great powers of the day, as they had for generations ; one party seeking a league with Egypt against Assyria ; another, close relations with Assyria against Egypt. Jeremiah, on the contrary, following the lead of Isaiah, urged that both were wrong ; that Judah ought to have no such foreign relations ; that, as the people of God, it should keep itself isolated from heathenism. Religion and politics were only different names for the same thing in the eyes of Jeremiah, as indeed they ought to be to us all. To his fellow-citizens he was the head of a third party in public life, urging his own views. But to him, alliance with a heathen nation was equivalent to adopting their idolatry, as, indeed, it had been already proved to be, only too fully.

Recalling the happy time when their ancestors were still faithful to Jehovah, in the youth of the nation, while it was still in the wilderness, he begins :

"II. 1. The word of Jehovah[7] has come to me, with the command: 2. Go and call out loud in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, Thus says

[1] Jer. vii. 2 ; xxvi. 2. [2] Jer. xvii. 19. [3] Jer. xxii. 1 ; xxvii. 18.
[4] Jer. xxxii. 2. [5] Jer. xviii. 2. [6] Jer. xix. 2.

[7] **Jer. ii. 1-5.** Knobel thinks this discourse was delivered in the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim. *Prophetismus*, vol. ii. p. 272. Graf, that it was spoken in

Jehovah, I remember favourably the kindness of thy youth; the love of thy time of betrothal, when thou followedst me in the wilderness; in a land unsown. 3. Israel (as the bride of Jehovah) was (consecrated, and) sacred to Him—His first fruits—(in contrast to other nations it was what the holy sheaf of first fruits, waved before Him at the solemn feast, and forbidden to be touched by profane lips—is to the common growth of the field.[1]) All who eat these sacred fruits commit sacrilege, and so did all who touched[2] Israel (Jehovah's first fruits of the nations). Evil befell them! says Jehovah."

But though thus betrothed to God, and loved by Him as His bride, Israel had been unfaithful to Him.

"4. Hear the word of Jehovah, O House of Jacob, and all the clans of the House of Israel! 5. Thus says Jehovah, What wrongdoing did your fathers find in Me, that they went far from Me, and walked after vanity[3] (that is, idolatry) and became foolish? 6. Saying no longer, 'Where is Jehovah, who brought us up from the land of Egypt, and led us in the wilderness; in a land of barren desert and pit-like rifts and clefts; a land of waterless plains, and of (gorges dark as) the shadow of death; a land through which no one passes, and where no man dwells?'

"7. Yet (in spite of this)[4] I brought you to a Carmel-land (a land of gardens), and gave you its fruit, and its richness, to eat. But when ye entered it ye defiled the land, and made My inheritance (the land that belongs to Me) an abomination. 8. The priests said not, 'Where is Jehovah?' and those who handled the Law[5] knew Me not;

the fourth year of Jehoiakim, or, at least, written down then. But it clearly suits the date assigned it in the text, which is adopted by Hitzig, Ewald, Naegelsbach and Keil, and J. D. Michaelis, among others.

[1] The rite of the first fruits thus alluded to is laid down in Exod. xxiii. 16, 19; xxxiv. 22, 26; Lev. xxiii. 10–14; Num. xviii. 12; xxviii. 26; Deut. xxvi. 2. The books of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers must, therefore, have been known to Jeremiah, for Deuteronomy, even in the opinion of the newer criticism, was not yet discovered when this prophecy was delivered. These books could not then be a literary forgery of the time after the Exile, as some venture to assert. [2] Or, devoured.

[3] Vanity Hebrew, Hebel = a breath, a thing empty and worthless; hence, an idol.

[4] **Jer. ii. 6–8.**

[5] That is, occupied themselves with it, as a reaper with his sickle; a boatman with his oar; a player with his pipe, etc. See the verb Taphas, in the Hebrew lexicons. This passage shews that Jeremiah believed that the Law was as old as the early forefathers of his race. Some critics try to evade this demonstration by saying that by the Law or Torah, is meant, "not a book, but an oral decision," though how the priests could "handle an oral or spoken decision," is not easy to imagine. It is

these, the shepherds (of My people), fell away from Me, and the prophets prophesied in the name of Baal, and went after worthless idols!

"9. Therefore I will still (further) plead (the matter) with you, saith Jehovah, and with your sons' sons will I plead it. 10. Pass over to the island of Cyprus,[1] and to the other coasts of the Greeks (on the west), and see; send to Kedar (in Arabia, on the east), and mark well, and notice, if the like has happened with them (as with you). 11. Has any people changed gods, though their gods be no gods really?[2] But My people have changed (Me,) their glory, for worthless idols!

"12. Be dumb with astonishment, O heavens,[3] at this! shudder with terror; be ye utterly amazed! says Jehovah. 13. For My people have committed a double sin; they have forsaken Me, the Fountain of Living Waters, and have dug out for themselves (poor underground) cisterns, full of rents, that can hold no water![4]

"14. Was Israel, (the northern kingdom), a servant (of thine, O Jehovah, worshipping thee)—Thy slave—(or, still closer, was he not a son of Thy house)?[5] Why, then, was he left to be spoiled (by the

granted, indeed, that the office of the priest is here said to be "to handle the Law." *Bible in Jewish Church*, p 295. That the word Torah should be gravely said to mean "oral decisions," except in the same way, and with the same limitations, as in the case of a barrister, or a judge, giving in some special case his idea of the meaning of the law - is a phenomenon of perverted criticism, for even where such decisions are given, they assume the existence of the formal written law of which they are the supposed expression. It is alleged in support of this theory, that Micah (iii. 11) "complains that the priests give Torahs, or legal decisions, for hire." But the word Torah is not in the verse! It is the hiphil imperf. of yara(h), to throw, to throw out—hence, to teach, to instruct. The word Torah comes from it as much as our "law" comes from "to lay"—"to lay down," with a possible ultimate reference to the Greek "lego," "to arrange," "to say," "to utter" (as an oracle may). But was the Greek "Law" only an utterance of oracles or decisions, on chance questions of the moment? The Hebrew priest could explain the law on a point, but he could not make it. It would be as reasonable to say that because the lawyers give decisions "for hire," such decisions are all that is meant when we speak of the Law of England.

[1] Its capital was Citium = Chittim. Herzog, vol. iii. p. 215.

[2] A prominent critic quotes this text to prove that Jehovah gave Himself out only as a local god, like the idols themselves. *Bible in Jewish Church*, p. 27. But the matter may be left to any unprejudiced reader. There is not a hint of any such thought in the words. **Jer. ii. 9–14.**

[4] The ground in and around the cities of Palestine is honeycombed with huge subterranean water pits, or cisterns. The mouth is narrow; the sides smooth with cement; the shape like a huge demijohn.

[5] This is substantially the rendering of this very difficult passage, given by Eichhorn and then by Hitzig. It seems to me the best. The sense adopted by Naegelsbach and Keil—"Is Israel a slave and not free," etc.—"It would seem as if he were

Assyrians)? 15. The young lions[1] roared against him; they lifted up their voice; they laid his land waste; his cities were destroyed,[2] (and left) without an inhabitant. 16. In the same way (as Assyria did to Israel, the Egyptians), the sons of Memphis and Tahapanes,[3] have broken thy head (O Judah)![4] 17. Hast thou not brought this on thyself[5] by thy having forsaken Jehovah, thy God, when He was leading thee in the right way, (urging thee by His prophets to have no relations

regarded by God as such, else he would not be left to such misery"—seems artificial. Rosenmüller's rendering (Scholia in *Vet. Test. Jerem. Vatic.*, vol. i. p. 83) is as follows, borrowed from Ben Jarchi: "Who has caused that he whom God formerly called a son, and whom no one dared touch with impunity, is now a slave—he who, if treated badly by others, was not thus used by his Lord, who pitied him as a father pities his children." I don't understand this. "A slave of Jehovah" is a very common phrase in the Bible for His servant or worshipper; *e.g.*, 1 Kings viii. 66, "David His slave." So xi. 13, 32, 34, 36-38; xiv. 8. In fact, to call one's self the slave of another was, and still is, in the East, a very usual form of speech from a lower to a higher. Barzillai calls himself David's slave, 2 Sam. xix. 37. Zimri is the slave of Elah, king of Israel, 1 Kings xvi. 9. Obadiah is the slave of Elijah, 1 Kings xviii. 9, and so on. Moses is constantly called the slave of God, 1 Kings viii. 53-56, etc. The ordinary idea of service, in fact, was that of a slave: the Hebrews knowing nothing else in common life. Slaves were of two kinds: those bought from without or taken in war; and children born in the household, who were nearer to their masters than the others, and more jealously protected. I should, by the way, have said that Graf translates the words above—"Israel is given up to plunder, as if he were a slave, or one born in the house." Calvin's rendering is in effect that of Jarchi, adopted by Rosenmüller. Reuss translates it, "Is he a slave who may be *sold* to his enemies? Is he not rather an adopted son; or, still more, a loved spouse?"

[1] The lion must have been very common in Palestine, as there are no fewer than seven words used for it in the O. T. (1) Ari or Aryeh, denoting the beast in general, without reference to age or sex. (2) Kepheer—the word in the text—the lion or, specially, the young lion, Judg. xiv. 5; Job iv. 10; Ezek. xix. 2. (3) Labi, a grown lion, or (labiya) lioness, Gen. xlix. 9; Num. xxiii. 24; xxiv. 9; Ezek. xix. 2; Nah. ii. 11. Used to imply the dignity and strength of the animal at its best. (4) Laish, with the same meaning, Prov. xxx. 30; the capital of Northern Dan got its name from the word. (5) Shahatz, meaning much the same, Job xxviii. 8. (6) Gar, or Gor, a cub. (7) Shahal, a vigorous lion, Job iv. 10; Ps. xci. 13. See vol. iii. pp. 10, 151.

[2] So Ewald, Hitzig, Graf. "Burned," Mühlau und Volck, Keil. "Broken down," Septuagint.

[3] The Daphnæ of the Greeks. A frontier town in Egypt, 16 miles south of Pelusium; Brugsch's Map. Psammetichus had a strong garrison in it. Indignant at his employing Greek mercenaries, they at one time revolted, and marched off with the rest of the native Egyptian army, to Syene in the far south. *Dict. of Geog.*

[4] Psammetichus being so long engaged in the siege of Ashdod, it is quite likely that raiding attacks from his army thus employed, are referred to. Yet this verse seems to point to a date after the fall of Josiah. So uncertain is the order of the various prophecies.

[5] Jer. ii. 15-19.

with the heathen nations round)? 18. What, therefore, hast thou to do, now, in the way to Egypt, to drink the waters of the Nile?[1] Or what hast thou to do with the way to Assyria, to drink the waters of the Great River[2] (instead of keeping to Jehovah, the Fountain of Living Water)?[3] 19. Thine own wickedness will punish thee, and thy defections from Me shall chastise thee. Know, therefore, and see how evil and bitter it is to forsake Jehovah, thy God, and that My fear is not in thee, saith the Lord, Jehovah of hosts."

ALTARS.

Israel has from of old been unfaithful, and has persisted in going after idols.

"20. For from long past times[4] thou hast broken thy yoke and burst thy bonds[5]—(the bonds of thy covenant with Me, made at Sinai)—and hast said, 'I will not serve Jehovah,'[6] and on every high hill and under every green tree thou hast laid thyself down to play the harlot. 21. Yet I planted thee a noble vine[7] of a pure stock; how hast thou turned into degenerate shoots of a foreign (worthless) vine, to me? 22. Yea, though thou wash thee

[1] Hebrew, Shihor; Septuagint, Gēon. Shihor = black, referring to the troubled waters of the Nile, discoloured by the alluvial mud it brings with it from the far south. The word Gēon, or Gihon, is used by the Septuagint from the belief that the Nile was the same as Gihon, one of the four rivers of Paradise. See vol. i. p. 93.

[2] The Euphrates. This verse refers to political action, taken in Josiah's minority, to form leagues with Egypt and Assyria, no doubt with the idea of keeping the secret from each country of any intrigues with the other. The same course had been followed in the Northern Kingdom before its fall. See vol. iv. p. 279. Hos. xii. 1.

[3] The water of the Euphrates needs to stand till it clears, before it can be used, and it is then strained through a cloth, to keep back its hurtful sediment. Rosenmüller, vol. iv. p. 267.

[4] **Jer. ii. 20-22.**

[5] The Septuagint, Vulgate, Hitzig, Graf, and Keil, read "Thou" for "I."

[6] "Transgress," in the Authorized Version, is undoubtedly a later reading, from the very slight change of a Hebrew "d" for an "r," the two letters being almost identical in appearance. The Masoretic note reads the word as I have rendered it.

[7] Soraik, a specially prized vine, supposed to be the same as that which in Morocco is now called Serki, and in Persia Kishmish, with small round dark berries and soft stones. Niebuhr, *Descript. de l'Arabie*, p. 147.

with natron,[1] and take much soap,[2] thine iniquity remains black[3] before me, says the Lord Jehovah.

"23. How canst thou say, 'I am not polluted;[4] I have not gone after the Baals'? See thy doings in the valley (of Hinnom, where thou burnest thy children to Moloch);[5] take knowledge of what thou hast done; thou light-footed camel-filly, running madly hither and thither in thy heat; 24. thou art like a she wild-ass, used to the wilderness, which, in the fierceness of her desire, sniffs up the wind, and can be turned back by none, in her season. They that seek the camel-filly need not weary themselves by running after her. In her month they will find her (with the he-camels of the herd—Judah is mad after idols —you will find her beside them).

"25. ('O Judah,' says Jehovah,) 'run not (thus insanely after false gods), till thy feet are bare and thy throat parched with thirst!'[6] But thou answerest: 'It is useless speaking. No! I love strange peoples (and strange gods), and I *will* go after them.'

"26. As a thief is ashamed when he is caught,[7] so is the House of Israel[8] ashamed—they, their kings, their princes, their priests, and their prophets—(at being found) 27. saying to a block of wood, 'Thou art my father,' and to a block of stone, 'Thou hast brought me forth.' For they have turned their backs and not their faces to Me. But in the time of their trouble they will say to Me, 'Up, and save us!'"

[1] A *mineral* alkali gathered from the famous natron lakes in Egypt, sixty miles W.N.W. of Cairo. Natron is an impure form of soda. About 300 persons are still employed in collecting it from the edges of the pools or lakes. It is used in the East, with oil, as a substitute for soap.

[2] "Borith." A *vegetable* alkali obtained from the ashes of alkaline plants which flourish in the salt marshes of the coasts of Palestine and also on the shores of the Dead Sea. The various species of Salicornia and Salsola are mostly used, and an active trade in the potash made by burning them is still carried on. The manufacture is very like that of alkali from the burning of kelp, on the coasts of Ireland and Scotland. A soft soap, made by boiling olive oil with potash, is now used; oil being cheaper than tallow. Tristram's *Nat. Hist. of Bible*, p. 481; *Land and Book*, p. 532.

[3] Literally, "is written." Septuagint, "Still thou art stained by thine iniquities," etc.

[4] **Jer. ii. 23 28.**

[5] 2 Kings xxiii. 10. Jer. vii. 31; xxxii. 35. Moloch = Baal. Jer. xix. 5; xxxii. 35. Hos. ii. 8.

[6] Hitzig understands the bare feet to have reference to the leaping barefoot in the sacred dances round the altars of Baal, and the parched throat, of the effect of the continuous calling on the god. 1 Kings xviii. 26.

[7] Literally, "found."

[8] Judah could now take to herself the proud name of "Israel": the northern kingdom, which alone had a right to it, having perished.

Jehovah will then, however, refuse to help them.

"28. Where, then, are thy gods that thou hast made for thyself? Let them arise, if they can save thee in the time of thy trouble! For as many as are thy towns, so many are thy gods, O Judah[1] (and as many as the streets of Jerusalem, are the altars to Baal)."[2]

Since the whole people have apostatized, and no chastisement or warning from the prophets has had any effect, they cannot justly complain if God give them up to the sorest judgments. The apostasy has had no excuse; it has been a sin without parallel as without cause.

"29. Why[3] do ye murmur (at My threatenings), and talk against Me (for them)? You have all played foul with Me, says Jehovah. 30. I have smitten your sons in vain; they have not accepted the correction; your sword, like a destroying lion, has devoured your prophets.[4] 31. O (evil) generation (that ye are), mark for yourselves the word of Jehovah! Have I been (unfruitful, like) a wilderness, to Israel: a land of thick darkness[5] (as they say of the pathless desert, in which men wander without guidance, hopelessly, as if in deep night)? Why, then, say My people, 'We shall go where we like; we shall come no more to thee?' 32. Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride her showy sashes?[6] But My people—(My bride) have forgotten Me for days without number!"

Yet what had this license and unfaithfulness gained for them? They had only learned heathen wickedness, as seen in the persecution and martyrdom of the prophets and the followers of Jehovah.

"33. Why speedest thou thy way,[7] to seek love?[8] Thou hast thus

[1] The god of one town had no respect from the people of another, and was regarded as powerless outside his own narrow sphere. It is still so in Ceylon. Knox's *Ceylon*, p. 161.

[2] Septuagint.

[3] Jer. ii. 29-32.

[4] In the martyrdoms of Manasseh's time.

[5] Literally, "of the darkness of Jehovah."

[6] Girdles or belts, as ornaments.

[7] "Makest comely thy ways."

[8] Jer. ii. 33-37.

accustomed thyself[1] to evil deeds.[2] 34. The heart's blood of guiltless sufferers—(the prophets[3] and the godly)—is found on the skirt of thy robe. Thou didst not catch them breaking in, as thieves, to thy house, (else killing them would have been innocent).[4] But through the iniquity learned by all thy idolatrous ways, has blood been shed. 35. Yet thou sayest, 'Indeed I am innocent: His anger is turned away from me; no evil has fallen upon me (since Manasseh's day).' "

Jehovah, however, protests against this—

"Behold, I will try the matter with thee, because thou sayest, 'I have not sinned.' 36. Why art thou so eager to change thy policy,[5] O Judah? Thou shalt be brought to shame by thy new alliance with Egypt, as thou wast (in the past) by thy old alliance with Assyria.[6] 37. Yea, thou shalt come back from (this coquetting with) Pharaoh,[7] thine hand (clasped) over thy head (in token of trouble and sorrow),[8] for Jehovah despises those in whom thou trustest, and thou shalt not prosper in (thy relations with) them. III. 1. For He says,[9] 'If a man divorce his wife, and she go from him and become the wife of another man, can the first husband take her back (to be his wife) again?[10] (Is not that wife hopelessly polluted?) (And when the land of Judah, the bride of Jehovah, leaves Him and makes alliance with Egypt and Assyria,) is not that land utterly polluted? But thou (Judah) committest sin with many lovers, and yet thinkest thou (thus living in impurity) to return to me?'"[11]

God has good reason to speak thus, and to refuse to acknowledge Judah as His bride any longer.

[1] Literally, "thy ways."

[2] Copying the vices and violence of the heathen. Ewald. Hitzig. Graf. Keil.

[3] Verse 30.

[4] So, by the Law. Exod. xxii. 2. Jeremiah must have thus known Exodus. The text is obscure.

[5] Literally, "way."

[6] See 2 Chron. xxviii. 21; Isa. vii. 8.

[7] Nothing is known of overtures to Egypt on the part of Josiah, but it is quite possible that the heathen party, after Manasseh had been carried off to Babylon, may have inclined to Egypt for the time, since under Psammetichus it was rising fast into a great power once more.

[8] 2 Sam. xiii. 19. [9] Jer. iii. 1. [10] Deut. xxiv. 1-4.

[11] So, in effect, Ewald, Keil, Streane, Sachs, De Wette, Noyes.

"III. 2. Lift up thine eyes[1] to the treeless hills, and see where thou hast not been dishonoured. Thou hast sat by the wayside (like a harlot, to catch passers by), as the Arab lurks in the desert (to plunder wayfarers),[2] and thou hast polluted the land by thy lewdness and thy wickedness.[3] 3. For this reason showers have been withheld (from you), and there has been no latter rain.[4] But (though I thus sent drought on thee, to make thee consider and turn from thy evil ways) thou hast had a harlot's forehead, and hast refused to be ashamed. 4. Nay, dost thou not even now cry to Me,[5] 'My Father! Thou art the spouse of my youth! 5. Will He keep His anger for ever? Will He bear ill will against me, time without end?' Thou speakest thus, indeed, but still doest evil, ay, and art set on doing it!"

Such a discourse throws striking light on the position claimed by the Jewish prophets. As the representative of Jehovah, Jeremiah demands that the State shall follow his counsels, and not that of any political party, or even of the king. And as he interferes peremptorily in the foreign politics of the nation, we shall find him not less active in all internal questions—the size of estates, the low wages of the labourer, the rate of interest taken, the morals of priests and prophets, the violence of the lawless among the nobles, and whatever else, for the time, was a prominent evil in the community. Whereas the modern preacher deals almost wholly with the past or the future, ignoring the present as too dangerous for his peace or private interests, or, in his foolishness, too "worldly" for his calling, the prophets had for their great theme the fearless application of the princi-

[1] **Jer. iii. 2-5.**

[2] Judah has been eager after idolatry. The allusion here is, apparently, to the setting up heathen altars at the corners of the streets and at the city gates. 2 Kings xxiii. 8; Ezek. xvi. 25. The desert Arabs have in all ages been the same. See *Diod. Sic.*, ii. 48. Plin., *Hist. Nat.*, vi. 28.

[3] In shedding the blood of the prophets and martyrs. Chap. ii. 30, 34.

[4] See vol. iv. 246.

[5] Literally, "from now on." Chr. B. Michaelis points with acuteness to this expression, as shewing the words to have been spoken at the beginning of Josiah's reformation, which commenced in the twelfth year of that prince's reign.

ples of religion to every-day life, public and private, leaving to all ages a priceless lesson of the true sphere of religious teachers, and their work in the earth. Rites and ceremonies they left to the priests, regarding them as worthless, except as the expressions of lofty and sincere morality and homage to the unseen. Nor can we hope that our pulpits or clergy will ever fulfil their mission till they follow the same course. Like the prophets, they must be willing to take their life in their hands, if necessary, and to hold lightly, at all times, by their personal interests or convenience, giving themselves with a grand devotion to the denouncing of all abuses in political, public, or private life, without fear or favour. Were the dignitaries of the Church, in all its sections, to be tribunes of the people in the way in which the prophets were, they would vindicate and glorify their office as God intended. We need nothing so much in our day as the manliness and honesty of soul of men like Jeremiah, who feared God and no one else, and sought to make His kingdom a reality on earth, leaving the affairs of a future life to God, in the firm belief that to do one's duty here is the best security for whatever rewards may be reserved for eternity. It is to be noticed, moreover, that Jeremiah and his order, at large, cared nothing for politics simply as such; sought no position for themselves among the officials of the State, but treated all questions only in their religious bearing. They aimed at no more than to root out every form of evil from the land they loved; and to bring about a moral reform by insisting on hearty obedience to the Divine Law, between man and God, and man and his neighbour. Their voice, in fact, was that of ideal loyalty to heaven and to their brethren, and as such was the only true wisdom; the wis-

dom which no State can venture to forget save at its certain peril. They foreshadowed the grand ideal held up to all ministers of the religion of Jesus Christ, who pledge themselves, in their ordination vows, to imitate Him as their great Exemplar.

CHAPTER VIII.

BEGINNING OF THE REFORMATION UNDER JOSIAH.

Roused by the earnest preaching of Zephaniah and Jeremiah, and, it may be, by secret friends of the ancient faith in the palace, Josiah had openly shewn a religious bias, from the eighth year of his reign, when he was sixteen, the age at which Hebrew kings attained their majority. Some members of noble families, like Baruch, and his brother Seraiah,[1] who held office at court at a later date, were early won to the cause of Jehovah; if, indeed, they had not always been true to Him. Subsequent notices of them shew that, like Jeremiah, they must have been in their early manhood when they allied themselves with the prophet, but their sincerity was proved by a lifelong fidelity to him, when to shew it was full of danger. Maaseiah, also, the governor of Jerusalem,[2] joined the party of the old religion; with Hilkiah, the high priest,[3] Hanameel, the cousin of the prophet,[4] Shallum, the keeper of the priestly vestments, and his wife[5] Huldah, who, as late as the eighteenth year of Josiah, held the foremost place in Jerusalem, for her prophetic gifts, though Jeremiah had then been preaching for five years. Such a group formed the centre of a religious party, powerful in influence, if not in numbers, and strengthening the hands of the king in his projects of reform.

[1] Jos., *Ant.*, X. vi. 2. Baruch i. 1. Jer. xxxvi. 4, 10, 32.
[2] 2 Chron. xxxiv. 8
[3] 2 Kings xxii. 4. 2 Chron. xxxiv. 9. 1 Esdr. i. 8.
[4] Jer. xxxii. 7.
[5] The Septuagint says she was his mother. 2 Kings xxii. 14.

These could only, however, be slowly carried out, in the face of a depraved public opinion, slow to acquiesce in such changes. Idolatry had been the state-religion for nearly seventy years, so that the existing generation knew nothing, or next to nothing, of the faith of their fathers. Even the existence of the sacred "Book of the Law" seems to have been well-nigh forgotten, though it had been taught throughout Judah in the reign of Jehoshaphat, nearly three hundred years before,[1] and Jehoiada had laid it on the head of Jehoash at his coronation,[2] in accordance with the command in Deuteronomy,[3] two hundred and fifty years previously.[4] Nor was this wonderful, for all copies of it had doubtless been destroyed, as far as possible, during Manasseh's reign. The corruption of the priesthood, and of the great body of the prophets, had deepened the spiritual ignorance thus entailed, and confirmed the nation in its apostasy. A return to the religious ideas of the reign of David, which was the ideal of the godly Hebrew, was hence necessarily slow. Steps were taken to repair the temple, and its connected buildings, the first being to collect the necessary funds. Nearly two hundred and fifty years before, the whole fabric had been restored under Jehoash, but since then it had become sorely dilapidated by time and violence. Some of the kings had deliberately pulled down portions, to build their idolatrous high places and altars; rents shewed themselves in the walls and roofs; the timber work was decayed; the gold or bronze decorations had been in part stripped off, and the courts despoiled of their sacred equipments.[5] But it was no longer possible to obtain funds by the contributions of worshippers alone, as had been done in

[1] Jehoshaphat, B.C. 917.
[2] 2 Kings xi. 12.
[3] Deut. xvii. 18. This is to be noted as a hint respecting the age of that book.
[4] Jehoash, B.C. 877.
[5] 2 Chron. xxxiv. 11. 2 Kings xxii. 5, 6.

the days of Jehoiada.[1] The high officials who had charge of the temple gates were, therefore, sent through the whole land to collect contributions, not only in Judah, but over the old territory of the Ten Tribes, in which many Hebrew communities still survived.[2] The prejudice that had kept these from joining heartily with Hezekiah in a similar movement,[3] two generations before, had disappeared in the century which had nearly elapsed since his messengers had been sent out with a general invitation to them, to come to Jerusalem, to the Passover. The calves of Bethel and Dan had been long ago carried off by the Assyrians,[4] but though replaced by images of Baal, and by Asherahs, the sympathy of common blood now, at last, disposed the survivors of the Northern Kingdom to seek religious reunion with Judah, as the Samaritans did, at a later day. Josiah, moreover, bore himself as king of the undivided nation, including all its twelve tribes, having apparently taken advantage of the decline of Assyria, to occupy the northern territory as far as he could. It seems probable, indeed, that in his zeal to restore the ancient glory of David, he had even attacked the small nations round—Edom, Moab, and Ammon—who had been tributary to the Jews. Thus only, perhaps, can their subsequent inveterate bitterness, when Judah was in trouble, be explained.

While, however, the king, a young man of twenty-one, was feeling his way to a restoration of Jehovah-worship, Jeremiah, who was apparently about the same age, and had just been "called,"[5] was far from sharing any great expectations from the changes that might be made. They seemed to him only outward. The moral condition of the people

[1] 2 Kings xii. 4, 9.
[2] 2 Chron. xxxiv. 9.
[3] 2 Chron. xxx. 10.
[4] Hos. x. 5.
[5] In the thirteenth year of Josiah.

he regarded as terribly depraved, and he felt that even if outward conformity to the Law were restored, the heart of the multitude was still wedded to heathenism.

Such convictions, as was natural, reacted on the character of his utterances. Having to address audiences whose religious instincts had become perverted; mere rites and outward acts taking the place of the inner spiritual life demanded by Jehovah; conscience, moreover, being asleep, if not dead—refinements of language were laid aside, and clear and direct address took their place. Neglecting the beauties of rhetoric, or the measured rhythm common in the discourses of his order, he spoke mostly in earnest but simple prose, with only occasionally a higher flight. Some prophets might feel it most suitable to veil the future in vivid metaphor, or might speak in general terms of the approach of an awful day of Jehovah; but Jeremiah, like Isaiah, and even more completely than he, preferred to use the simplest language; announcing his predictions, from month to month and year to year, with wondrous preciseness, and leaving no room for question respecting their future fulfilment. He wished to give no excuse for any one saying, that "the days would pass, and the visions remain unfulfilled," or to mock at his words as dealing only with distant and far-off times.[1] He spoke, therefore, of the future, as one who saw its events with perfect distinctness, not like the scenery of dreams. Living in communion with the world around him, he used no riddles or parables, but painted the times to come as if they were present. Simplicity and directness were his supreme aims; if by any means he might win the popular heart for Jehovah.

From the moment of his receiving the Divine commission,

[1] Ezek. xii. 22-25, 27, 28.

all natural shyness and timidity had left him. His first oration, already given, shews the word of Jehovah, to use his own language, glowing in him like fire, and beating in his breast like an iron hammer.[1] Like a mirror, or a clear pool, his spirit reflected every detail of the lights and shadows falling on it from above. He might be naturally gentle and desponding, but as a prophet he knew no fear. Godly from his youth, he detested the falsehood, hypocrisy, and corruption around him, and denounced them with a noble sincerity, which no thought of self disturbed or weakened. His priestly relations must have won him social respect, for not only his father, but his connections were sacerdotal. But he suffered, as all true-hearted men must ever suffer, when truth and godliness assail hollow formality, and vested interest in wrong. The priests at Anathoth, his native village, ere long hated him intensely. He was too much in earnest for them. Like many in our own day, who should know better, they wished to keep things smooth; to let abuses remain undisturbed, and thus avoid trouble; and to content themselves with an outward propriety, unruffled by any breath of zeal or enthusiasm. In their snug benefices, they, with most of their brethren over the land, resented change or reform in Church or State, and wanted no Methodism such as he preached. He drew his inspiration, therefore, under God, not from his brethren, but from a nobler source. Deeply read in the Law and in the old prophets, he had stored his mind with their thoughts, their style, and even their words, till he often unconsciously repeated them. Drinking at such pure fountains, his soul was filled with lofty thoughts of God, of morality, of the past of Israel, and of its future destiny, and he had learned to abhor the lies of

[1] Jer. xxiii. 29.

all kinds flourishing around him, alike in sacred and secular life, and to denounce them with an energy that infuriated those who throve on them, but gained for him a posthumous homage from all succeeding generations of his race.

The second of his discourses preserved to us, must have been delivered very soon after the first. He had told his people the sad fate in store for them if they did not amend their ways, but they would not believe it possible that Jehovah would really cast them off. He reminds them, however, that their brethren of the Ten Tribes, part of the chosen people like themselves, had now for over ninety years been in exile. If they had been punished thus, why not Judah? But his heart sighed to think of any portion of his race being permanently separated from the rest. The troubles of Assyria, the rise of the Medes, and the breaking down of Asiatic kingdoms by the Scythians, may have kindled a fond hope that the Ten Tribes would ere long be brought back; knowing, as he did, from Divine intimations, that penitence would restore to them the favour of Jehovah. All this expressed itself in his next utterance.

"III. 6. Have[1] you seen, he asked (speaking for God), what Israel (the kingdom of the Ten Tribes), the Rebellious One, did? She *would* go up on every high hill and under every green tree, and there play the harlot. 7. And I, (Jehovah,) thought, 'After she has done all this, she will return to Me.' But she did not return. And the Faithless One, her sister Judah, saw it—8. saw that, for that special reason, because Israel, the Rebellious One, had committed adultery (that is, had given herself up to idols), I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce;[2] and yet Judah, her sister, the Faithless One, was not afraid, but went and played the harlot also. 9. And the result was that, though by the report of her lewdness, Israel had defiled the land, committing sin with idols of stone and of wood; 10. yet, for all this, Judah, her sister, the Faithless One (though she has turned to Me out-

[1] Jer. iii. 6–10. [2] Deut. xxiv. 1–4.

wardly in the reforms now begun by the king), has not turned to me with her whole heart, but with hollow insincerity,[1] says Jehovah.

"11. Moreover, Jehovah has said to me[2]—Israel, (the Rebellious,) has shewn herself to be more righteous than Judah, the Faithless. 12. Go, cry these words towards the northern countries (to which Israel has been carried off,) and say, Turn back, O Israel, the Rebellious, says Jehovah. I will not cause My face to fall[3] on you; for I am merciful, says Jehovah. I will not keep anger for ever. 13. Only acknowledge your iniquity; that you have fallen away from Jehovah, your God, and roamed about after strange gods, under every green tree, and have not listened to my voice, says Jehovah. 14. TURN BACK, ye rebellious sons, says Jehovah, for (though I put you away) I am (still) your husband, and I will take you (again, if you acknowledge your iniquity—take you) even if there be only one of a city, or two of a clan (thus penitent), and bring these back to Zion.[4] 15. And I will give you (as many as thus return) shepherds after My own heart, (like David of old);[5] princes who will (reign in My fear, and) feed (or rule) you, (their flock,) wisely and with understanding. 16. And when you have multiplied and grown fruitful in the land, in those days, says Jehovah, men will no longer speak of the Ark of the Covenant of Jehovah, nor will it even come into their thoughts; they will neither talk of it nor miss it, nor will it be restored; (for I will establish a NEW COVENANT with you, in which the Ark will be superseded by a far grander manifestation of My glory than it could boast, though I was throned between the cherubim over it.) 17. For all Jerusalem will then be called the Throne of God. (I will no more sit, unseen, in the Holy of Holies, but) all the heathen nations will stream like a flood to the holy city,[6] to (worship) the name of Jehovah (then reigning gloriously and openly in it), and they will no longer follow the stubbornness of their wicked heart."[7]

[1] Literally, with a lie. [2] **Jer. iii. 11-17.** [3] Gen. iv. 5.

[4] The presence of members of various tribes of the Northern Kingdom in Palestine so late as Christ's day, shews the fulfilment of this promise.

[5] 1 Sam. xiii. 14. Kings may have been called shepherds not only as "feeding" but as "defending" their people, for even now all shepherds in Palestine are armed to protect their charge from wild beasts or marauders. See St. John x. 1-16. "The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep." [6] **Jer. xvi. 19.**

[7] In the restored kingdom of David, God will give Israel good kings, and, being Himself present, there will be no further need of the Ark with its mere symbol of His presence, over the mercy seat, as hitherto. That venerable relic, however, was still in existence when Jeremiah spoke. See 2 Chron. xxxv. 3. But its loss in the approaching calamities of the city was final. There was no Ark in the Second Temple. 2 Macc. ii. 4, ff.

The bitter rivalry between the Northern Kingdom and Judah had burned fiercely while they divided the land between them. But the misfortunes of the Ten Tribes had long ago extinguished ancient grudges and rivalries, and had roused intense sympathy, and brotherly longing for the restoration of the exiles, that the whole race might be once more united. Hosea had yearned for such a consummation,[1] though Samaria was still in its glory in his day. Isaiah had pictured a time when Ephraim would not vex Judah, nor Judah Ephraim, but both would live together as one people.[2] Ezekiel, also, in a later day, was to brighten the vision of the future by similar anticipations,[3] for patriotism, next to loyalty to Jehovah, was a passion with the prophets in each generation. This golden time now rises before the eyes of Jeremiah.

"III. 18. In those days[4] (the banished ones of) the House of Judah will go (hand in hand) with (the exiles of) the House of Israel; they shall come, together, out of the Land of the North, to the land that I gave to your Fathers for an inheritance. 19. As for Me (says Jehovah), I thought, of old, leading you from Egypt, how I would make you My sons, and give you a glorious land, a heritage, the noblest among the nations,[5] saying thus to myself, I will do so, if thou call Me, 'My Father,' and never wander from My steps. 20. But, surely, as a wife is unfaithful to her husband, you have been faithless to Me, O House of Israel, says Jehovah."

Such tenderness on the part of God, it seems to the prophet, must rouse the guilty ones to repentance. Filled with this thought, he hears already, in the far distance, the wail of penitence from Israel.

[1] Hos. i. 11.
[2] Isa. xi. 13, 14.
[3] Ezek. xxxvii. 16-22.
[4] Jer. iii. 18-20.
[5] Gesenius. Ewald. Hitzig. Graf. Keil. Eichhorn. Naegelsbach. Eichhorn translates the former part of the verse: "I thought, on what condition could I give you the rights of sons, etc." "And determined thus I will do it if they say to Me 'My Father,' etc."

"21. A voice sounds[1] from the treeless hills:[2] the weeping and supplications of the sons of Israel, because they have turned aside from the right way, and have forgotten Jehovah, their God."

But now, in the midst of this weeping, is heard the voice of God, Himself, moved to pity.

"22. Turn back, ye rebellious children! I will heal your backslidings!"

Then rises the eager outcry of those thus tenderly addressed, hastening to profit by the gracious invitation.

"Behold! we come to Thee! Thou art, indeed, Jehovah, our God! 23. Assuredly only mocking disappointment comes from the (high places on) the hills, or from the tumult (of pilgrim crowds) on the mountains![3] Assuredly, in Jehovah our God, alone, is the salvation of Israel! 24. (Baal, and the Asherah)—The Shame—have consumed the substance of our fathers, from the youth of the nation, till now; their flocks and their herds, their sons and their daughters, have been lost to us (by the judgments we have suffered for our sin[4] and by the human sacrifices we have offered). 25. Let us lie down in our shame; let our confusion cover us! For we have sinned against Jehovah, our God; we, and our fathers, from the earliest times[5] until now, and have not hearkened to the voice of Jehovah, our God."

This confession God graciously accepts, and promises His restored favour, if the penitence expressed be sincere and permanent.

"IV. 1. If thou dost (really) turn back to Me, O Israel, saith Jehovah, then thou wilt return to thy land;[6] and if thou (really) put away thy idol abominations[7] from My sight[8] (and runnest not after

[1] **Jer. iii. 21 iv. 1.**

[2] The hills were the special places of prayer. Hos. iv. 13. Jer. iii. 2, 23; vii. 29. 2 Sam. xv. 32. Num. xxiii. 3. Ezek. xvi. 24.

[3] This rendering, which is that of Hitzig, seems the best. De Wette translates it "The idolatrous noise of the mountains," in allusion to the vociferous cries, etc., of the worshippers of Baal.

[4] Isa. lxv. 21, 22.

[5] Literally, "From our youth," *i.e.*, as a nation.

[6] De Wette.

[7] 1 Kings xi. 5-7. 2 Kings xxiii. 13.

[8] The Septuagint has "out of thy mouth," an allusion to their eating meats offered to idols. See Zech. ix. 7. The Levitical laws were thus in force, according to this reading, which is that of Ewald and Hitzig.

them, 2. and if thou wilt swear truly, uprightly, and with thy whole heart, 'By the life of Jehovah,'[1] to do all this, then shall the nations bless themselves in Me, and in Me shall they glory."[2]

Judah, in its self-righteousness, was little prepared to anticipate a fate like that of the Ten Tribes. Had not reformation begun under Josiah? But the prophet warns them, that only sincere repentance can save them from the same ruin as had overtaken their brethren.

"3. (Think not, O Judah and Jerusalem, that hollow outward amendment will avert a like doom.) For thus says Jehovah: Plough up your fallow ground,[3] and sow not among thorns; (good resolutions are not enough, if you still cherish sin in your heart). 4. Circumcise your hearts—(be truly, not merely outwardly, My people)—ye men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, lest My indignation burst forth on you like fire, and burn, so that no one can quench it, because of the evil of your doings."

No warnings could have been more solemn or awful than these; but they were of no avail. Josiah's Reformation proved largely superficial; no corresponding change shewed itself in the public and private life of the community. Nor was any to be anticipated under existing circumstances. To use one of their own metaphors, the nation must be purified in the furnace of affliction, and Jeremiah was now commissioned to announce this.

"The North" was the quarter from which the past disasters of both Israel and Judah had come, and the calamities of the near future were to burst over the land from the

[1] "As God liveth," or "as the Lord liveth," is the common form of oath in Palestine at this day, in confirming any matter. It is commanded in Deut. x. 20, 21, that the people "Swear by His, Jehovah's, name." **Jer. iv. 2-4.**

[2] Gen. xii. 3; xviii. 18; xxii. 18; xxvi. 4; xlviii. 20. The Hebrew has "Him" for Me, which is used to prevent a change of person not permitted by our idioms.

[3] The words are, "plough up your ploughed land." The ground was ploughed several times before each sowing. The stubble ploughed in was succeeded by a crop of thorns, and these had to be again turned under. See p. 8.

same regions. The nation to be employed as the instrument of Divine justice was not, however, distinctly named in Jeremiah's first utterances, and opinion has been divided respecting it. Eichhorn first suggested that the great "Scythian" invasion was intended, and in this he has been followed by Ewald, Hitzig, Bertheau, Mövers, and Duncker.[1] But it seems a fatal objection to this theory that chariots—which the Scythians certainly did not use—are mentioned as a special characteristic of the hostile forces. These savage hordes brought with them vast numbers of waggons, each drawn by over twenty oxen, and bearing a wicker frame covered with black or white felt, thirty feet in diameter—a great tent, in fact—lifted bodily off the carriage when they encamped for the night.[2] But these, assuredly, could not move "like a whirlwind."[3] It seems safer, therefore, to conclude that the Chaldæans from Babylon are intended, though nothing is said of the deportation of the population of Judah, but only of their being ruthlessly slaughtered.[4] Nor is it strange, though the first invasion by Nebuchadnezzar was still about thirty years distant, that Babylon should already have been dreaded. Nineveh was fast sinking, and had, indeed, been saved for a time, only by the inroad of the northern barbarians. It was destined to fall within the next fifteen or sixteen years, before the victorious Medes and Babylonians, who had shewn wonderful vigour after the death of Assurbanipal, which took place in B.C. 620. Nabopolassar, formerly Assyrian viceroy of Babylon, not only won and maintained his independence, but threatened the very existence of the Assyrian capital. Such a state of affairs would leave no room for hesitation.

[1] *Gesch. des Alterth.*, vol. i. p. 751, ff.
[2] Blakesley's *Herod.*, iv. 69. See pp. 83, 106.
[3] Jer. iv. 13. [4] Jer. iv. 7, 20.

Under these circumstances, Jeremiah, somewhere about the year B.C. 623, when the reformation had been some years in progress,[1] startled Jerusalem by a new and awful announcement, that the long-suffering forbearance of Jehovah being at last exhausted, He had determined to let loose a terrible enemy on Judah, and bring on its capital the long-predicted day of His vengeance.

"IV. 5. Make it known aloud in Judah, cried he: proclaim it in Jerusalem,[2] saying: Blow the trumpet of alarm in the land; cry with a mighty voice[3]—'Gather yourselves together, (ye people of the open villages,) and let us go into the fortified towns.'[4] 6. Raise a flag to point (out the way) to Zion:[5] flee thither for refuge; make no delay. For I (Jehovah) am about to bring evil out of the north, and a great destruction. 7. The Lion has come up from his thicket;[6] the destroyer of the nations has struck his tents,[7] and set out on his march, to make thy land desolate; (O Judah,) thy cities shall be laid waste, without an inhabitant![8] 8. Because of this, gird yourselves with sackcloth, (in token of mourning); beat on your breasts,[9] and raise the loud wail; for the burning anger[10] of Jehovah is not turned back from us![11] 9. At that day, says Jehovah, the heart of the king and the heart of the princes will faint:[12] the (unfaithful priests) be petrified with terror; the (false) prophets be in consternation!"

[1] It began apparently in B.C. 626.

[2] **Jer. iv. 5-9.**

[3] Literally, "with full throat."

[4] So the inhabitants of Attica crowded into Athens on occasion of a Spartan invasion. *Thuc.*, ii. 52. So, also, at Jerusalem before the last siege.

[5] Isa. xi. 10, 12.

[6] The thickets, or "swelling," or "excellency" of the bed of the Jordan were the great haunt of lions in Jeremiah's day. Hence "come up." It refers to the animal's ascent from its lair in the sunken jungle, which stretches at intervals along the whole course of the Jordan, far below the level of Anathoth and Jerusalem. See Jer. xxv. 38; xlix. 19; l. 44. Also Wilton's *Negeb*, p. 43. See pp. 239, 372 of this vol., and vol. ii. p. 437.

[7] Literally, "has pulled up his tent stakes."

[8] See Jer. chap. xliii. 5-7.

[9] Literally.

[10] See verse 4.

[11] Their reformation had as yet been only superficial. The sins of the past had not been heartily forsaken.

[12] Keil and Hitzig understand this passage: the intellect will be paralyzed—they will "lose their head."

These prophets had built great hopes on the restoration of the temple and the destruction of idols and heathen altars now going on, and had confidently predicted peace and prosperity.

"10. Then said I,[1] Alas, O Lord, Jehovah,[2] Thou hast surely let this people, Judah, and (the citizens of) Jerusalem, be greatly deceived by the (false) prophets, who (thinking the return to Thy worship would bring prosperity) have told them, 'Ye shall have peace.' But the sword is about to pierce to the very soul! 11. (When the enemy is advancing,) it shall be said to this people and to Jerusalem—'A scorching east wind blows from the burnt-up[3] hills of the wilderness, towards the daughter of My people; (a wind) not to winnow or to cleanse (for its gusts will carry away chaff and grain together):[4] 12. a storm wind[5] comes from Me upon them.'

"Now, therefore, says Jehovah, shall I give forth My sentence against them.[6] 13. Behold, the enemy comes (up in dense, huge masses) like clouds;[7] his chariots rush on like a whirlwind; his horses are swifter than eagles. Woe to us, we are destroyed!"

Salvation from utter ruin is still possible! But, for this, real, not merely nominal, reformation, is before all things needed.

"14. O Jerusalem,[8] wash thy heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved! How long shall thy sinful thoughts[9] lodge within thee? 15. (It is surely high time to amend, for) hark, a voice cries from Dan

[1] By a slight change in a vowel, Ewald would read, "Hence it is said,"—putting the verse into the mouth of the false prophets, who claim that their announcement of "peace" was from Jehovah. It would read thus: "Hence it is said, Verily, Thou hast deceived this people and Jerusalem, O Lord Jehovah, saying, 'You shall have peace,' whereas, the sword reaches to the soul."

[2] **Jer. iv. 10–13.** [3] Literally, "bare."

[4] Wetstein, in Delitzsch's *Hiob*, p. 320. "In the harvest time the threshed grain lying on the open-air threshing floors cannot be winnowed. A moderate and steady breeze, which comes only from the west and south, is needed. The north wind is too strong, and the east wind comes in continual gusts, which blow away grain and chaff together." Winnowing is done, as a rule, between four P.M. and a half-hour before sunrise—*i.e.*, in the evening and during the night, while the west wind from the sea is blowing. Riehm, *H. W. B.*, p. 23. [5] Hitzig. [6] De Wette.

[7] Ezek. xxxviii. 16. [8] **Jer. iv. 14–18.** [9] Eichhorn, false hopes.

(in the north), announcing (the approach of the foe, and the) evil news (is echoed back) from the mountains of Ephraim! 16. 'Make it known among the nations' (shouts the messenger),[1] 'proclaim it in Jerusalem —Besiegers come from a far country and lift up their voice against the towns of Judah.' 17. Like watchers of a field are they round about Zion,[2] because she has been rebellious against Me, says Jehovah. 18. Thy way and thy doings have brought this upon thee! This is the fruit of thy wickedness, and, indeed, it is bitter, and pierces even to thy heart!"

The agony of grief at such a calamity is universal, and is expressed in touching words, for himself and others, by the prophet.

"19. My breast![3] O, my breast! I tremble for sorrow![4] The walls of my heart will break! My heart groans within me; I cannot keep it still.[5] For thou, my soul, hearest the trumpet-peals; hearest the cries of war! 20. Calamity after calamity is proclaimed, for the whole land is laid waste: the dwellings[6] of My people are suddenly spoiled; their tents[7] in a moment! 21. How long shall I see the banner[8] and hear the loud trumpet?"

Jehovah now speaks:

"22. (Could it, indeed, be otherwise?) For truly My people is foolish; they have not known Me: stupid children, without sense; wise to do evil, but without sense to do good."

[1] This is the sense given by most, implying a summons to them to see the judgments of God, even on His chosen people. Hitzig translates the phrase, "make it known respecting the barbarians, that," etc. It would thus be a proclamation of the approach of the enemy.

[2] The keepers or watchers of a field or vineyard cry out loudly at intervals through the night, to let it be known that a strict watch is being kept. There are no *enclosed fields* in Palestine. The watchers, therefore, in reality, are in the open country, and the tents of the besiegers round Jerusalem are compared to their huts. See Lev. xiv. 7; xvii. 5. Luke ii. 8. Job xxvii. 18.

[3] **Jer. iv. 19-22.** [4] I writhe in pain. [5] Or, hold my peace. [6] Tents.

[7] "Tent-coverings." The use of these words for the dwellings of a settled people shews how long the tradition of their former nomadic life remained amongst them, as, indeed, it does, in the Feast of Tabernacles, to this day. See, for similar expressions, 2 Sam. xviii. 17; xx. 1. 1 Kings viii. 66; xii. 16.

[8] The Assyrians had standards fixed on their chariots, generally emblems enclosed in a circle, with streamers waving from the long pole which they surmounted. Layard's *Nineveh*, vol. ii. p. 347

The prophet, therefore, passes on to describe the awfulness of the impending judgments:

"IV. 23. I looked on the earth,[1] and, behold, it is waste and empty; on the heavens, and their light is gone. 24. I looked on the mountains, and, lo, they trembled; on the hills, and they swayed to and fro. 25. I looked, and, lo, there were no men, and all the birds of the heavens were gone. 26. I looked, and lo, the fruitful land was become a desolate wilderness,[2] and all its towns were thrown down before Jehovah; before His glowing anger! 27. For thus saith Jehovah—The whole land shall be desolate; though I will not make an utter end of it. 28. For this shall the earth mourn, and the heavens above be darkened, because I (Jehovah) have spoken and purposed, and will not repent nor draw back from it. 29. Every city[3] shall flee at the noise of the horsemen and archers;[4] the population crowd into the (dark) thickets[5] (of the woods,) and climb up into the (hollow) rocks.[6] Every city is forsaken; no man dwells in any of them!

"30. And thou (daughter of Zion), given up to the spoil,[7] what art thou doing? (Dost thou hope by thy arts to win over the victors to mercy, as a woman by her charms prevails on her lovers to shew her favour? It will be useless.) Though thou clothest thyself in purple, and deckest thyself with golden ornaments, and makest thine eyes appear larger, by painting (thine eyelids with antimony,[8]) in vain dost thou make thyself fair! The foe thou wouldst win to love thee, will despise thee and seek thy life! 31. For I hear a cry as of a woman in labour, the cry as of one that is bearing her first child; it is the voice of the daughter of Zion, sighing deeply, as she spreads out her hands (in her sorrow,) and wailing: 'Woe is me, my soul lies helpless before the murderers!'"

But the fate of Jerusalem, though thus terrible, was not undeserved. Its corruption and wickedness were beyond conception.

[1] Jer. iv. 23-31. [2] Hitzig.

[3] This is clearly the proper reading. See Keil. Sachs. Noyes. The last word of the verse shews this. Instead of "therein" it should be "in them."

[4] Literally, "treaders of the bow." They bend it with the help of the foot.

[5] The word means a thicket *from its darkness*.

[6] The etymology shews that caves or hollows are meant. [7] Gesenius.

[8] Lane's *Modern Egyptians*, vol. i. pp. 45, 46.

"V. 1. Run ye to and fro,[1] through the streets of Jerusalem, (saith Jehovah,) and see and learn: seek in its open places, if ye can find a (single) man; seek if there be *one* who acts uprightly, who practises good faith, and I will pardon her. 2. For even when they make oath 'by the life of Jehovah,' they (nevertheless) swear falsely."[2]

The prophet now speaks.

"3. O Jehovah, do not Thine eyes look for good faith? Thou smitest them, but they feel it not; Thou destroyest them, but they refuse to receive the lesson: they make their face harder than rock: they will not turn back. 4. I thought in myself, 'It must be only the poor who act thus: they act foolishly, because they do not know the way of Jehovah—the law of their God. 5. I will go to the great people, and speak with them, for they know the way of Jehovah—the law of their God.' But these, also, one and all, have broken in pieces the yoke (of God's law), and torn away from its bonds.[3]

"6. For this cause a lion from the forest[4] shall slay them; a wolf of the evenings[5] shall destroy them; a leopard shall keep an eye on[6] their

[1] **Jer. v. 1–6.** [2] Lev. xix. 12. Matt. v. 34, 35.

[3] The figure is from oxen chained to the plough.

[4] The word is yāār. See vol. iv. p. 369.

[5] Keil, Hitzig, Ewald, Sachs, De Wette, Naegelsbach, Driver, Cheyne, and Fürst, translate this word, "of the steppes." But Mühlau and Volck, and Gesenius, translate it as the plural of Ereb = "evening." Canon Tristram, in his *Nat. Hist. of the Bible*, p. 154, gives the following incident, which vividly illustrates many texts: "Their boldness is very remarkable. When camping at desolate Moladah, on the southern frontier of Simeon, I had one evening wandered alone three or four miles from the tents. In returning before sunset, I suddenly noticed that I was followed at an easy distance by a large tawny wolf. The creature kept about 200 yards behind me, neither increasing nor diminishing his distance. I turned upon him, and he also turned. In vain I endeavoured to close with him, for he always exactly accommodated his pace to mine. We continued respectively to advance and retreat without coming to close quarters. The wolf's evident intention was to keep me in sight *until evening*, when he hoped to steal on me in the darkness, unperceived. He never uttered a sound of any kind, and walked as if unconscious of my presence. When it was nearly dark I found him rapidly closing upon me, and, thinking him within shot, I halted, when he, too, stood looking at me. I drew my charge, slipped down a ball, and took deliberate aim, without his moving. The bullet struck a rock between his legs, and then he turned and trotted very quietly away." *N. H. B.*, p. 154.

The word for "evenings" is identical with the plural of Arabah = "a desert," etc. —though the singular is Ereb. This plural is used only in this text, Jer. v. 6.

[6] The leopard was formerly common in Palestine. "The mountains of the leopards" are mentioned in Cant. iv. 8. The creature is still a pest to the herdsmen in the mountains of Gilead. The sheik of one village shewed Canon Tristram four skins

towns; every one who goes out from them will be torn in pieces; because their transgressions are multiplied, their sins increased.

"7. How, then, can I pardon you?[1] Thy sons have forsaken me, and have sworn by the 'No-gods!'[2] I bound them by a marriage oath to Me,[3] but they broke it and committed adultery, and trooped into the house of the harlot. 8. Like over-fed stallions, they roam around:[4] they neigh each after the other's wife. 9. Shall I not visit you for such things? says Jehovah. Shall not My soul be avenged on such a nation as this?"

In spite, therefore, of the idea of security fostered by lying prophets, Jehovah will carry out His threats, and lay the land and its capital waste, by a cruel and terrible enemy, now formally commissioned to assail them.

"10. Go up[5] amongst the planted rows of My vineyard,[6] and lay it waste, but do not utterly destroy it. Cut down its bearing shoots, for they are not Jehovah's! 11. For (both) the House of Israel and the House of Judah have been utterly faithless to Me, saith Jehovah. 12. They have denied Jehovah, and said, 'He is not, and trouble will *not* come on us, and we will *not* see either sword or famine. 13. The (words of the) prophets (who say we shall suffer this) will prove empty talk; for he who speaks through them is no god[7]—(they speak of themselves, or by an evil spirit); may their prophecies come on their own heads!'

of leopards recently killed. Their tracks are frequently seen about the Dead Sea, and they are also found on Mount Tabor and Mount Carmel. Another animal of the leopard kind is also found occasionally on the hills of Palestine—the cheetah, or hunting leopard of India. It is much less formidable, however, than the leopard. Tristram, *N. H. B.*, p. 113. Both are much dreaded, as they lurk about encampments, to pounce on any stray animal, or even men, who may come out after dark. The allusion in the text is to this habit. See Hos. xiii. 7.

[1] **Jer. v. 7–9.** [2] A contemptuous name for idols.

[3] Keil. De Wette. Hitzig. Naegelsbach. Gesenius. The only change needed in the Hebrew is the substitution of "Sh" for "S," which is found in the Masoretic notes. Shabah is "to swear, or, cause to swear;" Saba is "to feed to the full." See Böttcher, vol. ii. p. 154.

[4] Gesenius. Keil. [5] **Jer. v. 10–13.**

[6] Canaan is the vineyard of Jehovah. Isa. iii. 14; v. 1, ff. Jer. ii. 21. The Jews were the vine. That this figure is intended is shewn by the second half of the verse, where "branches" must be read instead of "battlements." Eichhorn—whose translations are always vigorous—reads the passage: "Pull down the trellis work of her vines."

[7] Literally, "no one."

"14. Wherefore,[1] thus says Jehovah of Hosts, because ye speak thus, behold, I shall make My words in thy mouth, fire (O Jeremiah), and this people wood, which the fire will burn up! 15. Lo! I bring on you a nation from afar, O House of Israel,[2] says Jehovah; a nation countless in numbers;[3] a nation of hoary antiquity;[4] a nation whose language you do not know; whose words you do not understand;[5] 16. their quiver[6] is like an open grave; they are all mighty warriors. 17. They shall eat up your harvest and your bread; they shall eat up your sons and your daughters;[7] they shall eat up your flocks and your herds; they shall eat up your vines and your fig trees; they will lay in ruins, at the point of the sword,[8] your fortified towns, in which you trusted. 18. Yet, even in those days, says Jehovah, I will not make an utter end of you.

"19. And when ye say, 'Why has Jehovah, our God, done all this to us?' you shall answer them: As ye forsook Me and served foreign gods in your own land, ye shall serve foreigners in a land that is not yours.[9] 20. Tell this to the House of Jacob, and publish it in Judah, saying: 21. Hear this, ye foolish race—without understanding; who have eyes, and do not see; ears, and do not hear![10] 22. Will ye not fear Me? says Jehovah; will ye not tremble before Me, who have placed the sand as a bound to the sea—a perpetual barrier, which it cannot pass? Though it lift itself up it is powerless; though its waves roar, they cannot cross the bounds I have set for it. 23. But this people (less obedient than inanimate nature) has a revolting and rebellious heart; they turn away (from Me), and go their own way (transgressing the laws I have given them). 24. Nor do they ever say in their hearts, 'Let us now fear Jehovah, our God, who gives rain, both the early and the latter, in its season; who secures for us the return of the weeks

[1] **Jer. v. 14-24.** [2] Judah.

[3] Literally, enduring; exhaustless in its numbers; not to be got rid of by the destruction of a part.

[4] The Chaldees were very ancient. Berosus represents the Chaldæan kingdom as established at least twenty-three centuries before Christ. Rawlinson's *Anct. Mon.*, vol. i. p. 189. Sargon of Accad, as we have seen, reigned B.C. 3750.

[5] Their appeals for mercy would, thus, be idle. See Deut. xxviii. 49. See also Wilkins, *Phenicia and Israel*, p. 7. [6] See Jer. iv. 29.

[7] It seems to have been the belief of the Jews, that the foes from the north devoured children.

[8] Or with weapons of war generally, Jer. xxxiii. 4. Ezek. xxvi. 9, "axes."

[9] This would not apply if the enemy threatened were roving hordes, like those of the Scythians.

[10] **Jer. iv. 22. Hos. vii. 11.**

appointed for the harvest.'[1] 25. Your iniquities have driven away these from you: your sins have deprived you of this good. 26. For among My people are found wicked men; they lie in wait as a bird-catcher (hides himself from the birds); they set (murderous) snares, and catch men. 27. Their houses are as full of (riches gained by) deceit as a cage (of the bird catcher) with birds; through this they have become great and rich. 28. They have grown fat and shine (with sleekness); they go beyond bounds in wickedness; (as judges) they do not uphold the right; they betray the cause of the fatherless—to make money out of them; they do not uphold the right of the helpless. 29. Shall I not visit them for such things, says Jehovah—shall not My soul be avenged on such a people?

"30. An appalling and horrible thing is committed in the land; 31. the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests rule according to their word,[2] and My people like it to be thus.[3] But what will ye do when the end of all (this) comes—(the awful judgment of God on the nation)?"

That judgment is no longer doubtful. A hostile army will, ere long, march against Jerusalem and besiege it.

"VI. 1. Flee, O ye sons of Benjamin,[4] out of the midst of Jerusalem;[5] let the trumpets sound in Tekoa: display a blazing fire beacon[6] at Bethhaccerem,[7] for overwhelming calamity is imminent from the

[1] The seven weeks between the Feast of the Passover and that of Weeks. On the day after the Sabbath in the former, the priest waved a sheaf of barley, the first-fruits of the early harvest, before Jehovah. Lev. xxiii. 10. At the latter, wheat-bread, the first-fruits of the second harvest, Lev. xxiii. 17, was waved, the one crop ripening so much later than the other.

[2] The deepening corruption of the prophets made the position of Judah increasingly hopeless. The priesthood was against Jeremiah; yet, if the prophets had supported him, he might have felt that all was not lost. But that lying prophets should oppose and contradict revelation, and that they should authoritatively interpret the Law to suit their own aims, and gain the priesthood to carry out this organized perversion of the Divine will, was indeed appalling and horrible.

[3] Amos iv. 5. [4] Jer. vi. 1.

[5] Many Benjamites lived in Jerusalem, 1 Chron. ix. 3, 7. Jeremiah perhaps thinks of them, first, as his fellow-tribesmen. Jerusalem stood in the territory of Benjamin.

[6] The word Masaith refers to the ascending of smoke in burning. A word formed from it is used in the Talmud for the fire beacons at the time of the new moon. They were often kindled on the top of a tower, which the word also means. See Judg. xx 38.

[7] Tekoa is a hamlet in the hill country, twelve miles to the south of Jerusalem, and visible from the city. Bethhaccerem lies in the hills nearer Jerusalem. *Hieron.*

north. 2. Comely and delicate (as she) is, (I will destroy) the daughter of Zion!' 3. The shepherds with their flocks (that is, kings with their hosts) are coming towards her; they will pitch their tents round about her; they will cut down, every one, his share of her. 4. (They will say,) let us offer the war sacrifices and lose no time; let us go up and storm her at noon (in the heat of the day,[2] when men rest, and attack will be least expected! Even this delay, indeed, will seem too long for them). 'Alas, the day is sinking,' will be the cry; 'the evening shades are stretching out. 5. Up! let us storm her in the night, and destroy her palaces (without waiting for noon)!'[3]

"6. For thus has Jehovah of Hosts spoken—Hew down her trees,[4] and raise a mound against Jerusalem,[5] which is the city to be punished; she is filled to the full with oppression (of the poor and needy, by fraud, extortion, and pillage).[6] 7. As a fountain sends forth its waters, so she pours out her wickedness:[7] violence and plundering are heard within her; suffering and death, from wounds, are continually before me.[8]

"8. Be warned, O Jerusalem, lest my soul be alienated from thee,[9] lest I make thee desolate; a land not inhabited.

in loc. Tekoa = "pitching of tents," or, perhaps, "trumpet clang." Bethhaccerem = "the house of the vineyard." It seems to have stood on the prominent conical hill known now as the Frank Mountain, and would thus be eminently suited for a fire signal.

[1] Jerusalem. **Jer. vi. 2-8.**

[2] Isa. xiii. 2. Jer. li. 27, 28. Deut. xx. 2. Ezek. xxi. 21-23.

[3] The scientific warfare implied in besieging a fortress was unknown to the "Scythians."

[4] Deut. xx. 20.

[5] A vast mound of earth, sloping on the outer side, was raised close to the walls of a besieged town: its top as high as that of the walls themselves. Wooden towers (for which the felling of trees was necessary) were then dragged up the inclined plane of the mound, to drive the defenders from the ramparts. This course was usual with the Assyrians and Babylonians, 2 Kings xix. 32. From them the art probably passed to the Medes and Persians. Herodotus mentions it in his narrative of the campaign of Cyrus in Asia Minor. The mound in this case was made after the arrival of Harpagus, *the Mede*. Herod., i. 162. See note. Blakesley's *Herod.*, i. 119. Rawlinson's *Herod.*, i. 162.

[6] Ezek. xxii. 7, 12. Ps. lxxiii. 8. Jer. xxii. 17. Nah. iii. 1.

[7] Hitzig and Graf render these words, "as a cistern keeps its water cool and fresh; so she, her wickedness!" They suppose the word used, to be derived from a verb meaning "to be cool," or "fresh" (Karar), but it is generally assumed to be from the verb Kûr, "to dig out" (so that the waters rise in the excavation).

[8] This seems the most exact sense of the two words used, "Choli" and "Maccah," as seen in their renderings elsewhere in the A. V.

[9] The word used is applied to the violent tearing away, or dislocation of a member. It is most touching to think of Jehovah employing such a word, to shew the sorrow with which He would at last withdraw from His people, if they forced Him to do so.

"9. Thus saith Jehovah of Hosts, The remnant of Israel [1] shall be gleaned thoroughly, as men glean [2] the vintage, turning back the hand again and again, like the gleaner, to the cluster-bearing shoots." [3]

The prophet is at a loss to whom to announce this awful message. Those who should especially hear it, refuse to do so. He will, therefore, proclaim it aloud in the streets.

"VI. 10. But to whom shall I speak, and give warning, that they may hear? Behold! their ear is uncircumcised (and thus closed up) so that they cannot hear.[4] Behold! the word of Jehovah is a derision to them; they have no pleasure in it. 11. But I am full of the fierce anger of Jehovah; I can no longer keep it shut up (in my breast). I will pour it forth [5] to the children (playing) in the street; to the company of young men (met) together (for amusement or talk); for both husband and wife will be overtaken (by God's judgments); the old man also, and even he whose days are nearly over.[6] 12. And their houses will pass to others; and so will their fields and their wives together—for I will stretch out My hand over the inhabitants of the land, says Jehovah. 13. For, small and great, they are all bent on selfish and base gain; from the prophet to the priest, every one cheats. 14. And both (prophet and priest pretend to) heal the wound of my people, as if it were slight—(making nothing of it [7])—saying, 'All is well, all is well,' when it is the very reverse! 15. They will have to be ashamed for the abomination they have committed; yet they are not (at present) ashamed in the least, they do not know how to blush. Therefore will they fall amongst the falling (when the city is taken); at the time when I visit them, they will stumble, says Jehovah!"

[1] Chap. iv. 27; v. 10, 18. **Jer. vi. 9-15.**

[2] The word to glean is from a root = to drink again and again till one can drink no more, and implies completeness—the leaving nothing.

[3] So Fürst and Hitzig. It is hard to decide where doctors differ. Hitzig asserts that the word Salsilloth—translated "baskets" in the A. V.—never means baskets, but always "tendrils" and the like. Fürst agrees with him. But Gesenius, Mühlau and Volck, De Wette, and Sachs think it does mean baskets. Yet, as Eichhorn, Keil, and Ewald agree with Hitzig and Fürst, and the sense appears better, I have adopted their rendering. Salsilloth is, indeed, not unlike Zalzallim (Isa. xviii. 5), which certainly means vine shoots.

[4] Isa. vi. 10. Jer. iv. 4.

[5] The imperative is used, but the future suits the English sense better. The prophet is speaking to himself.

[6] 1 Chron. xxix. 28.

[7] Septuagint.

Without true repentance and a change of heart, judgment cannot be averted, whatever sacrifices they may offer. Jeremiah is saying nothing new. The course he urges was that in which the godly among their fathers walked.

"VI. 16. Thus says Jehovah,[1] 'Take your stand in the ways; look round you and ask (if you have any doubt) for the old paths;[2] the paths which, alone, lead to true good; and walk in them, and you will find rest for your souls.' But they said, 'We will not walk in them.' 17. I also set watchers (the prophets[3]) over you, saying, 'Hark, the sound of the trumpet!' But they said, We will not hearken.

"18. Hear, therefore, ye (foreign) nations; learn, O assembly (of the peoples),[4] that which is coming upon them! 19. Hear, O earth! behold, I will bring evil upon this race as the fruit of their devices, because they had not hearkened to My words, and as to My Law,[5] they have despised it. 20. (This being so,) what is the incense worth to Me, that comes from Sheba, and the costly spice-reed from a far country?[6] Your whole burnt offerings are not acceptable (to Me), and your sacrifices do not smell sweet to Me![7]

"21. Therefore, thus saith Jehovah, Behold, I will lay stumbling

[1] **Jer. vi. 16–21.** [2] Deut. xxxii. 7. Jer. xviii. 15; xxxii. 39, 40.

[3] Ezek. iii. 17; xxxiii. 7.

[4] Ewald renders these words, "O congregation of Israel." Graf thinks the text corrupt. The Septuagint has, "and they that feed their flocks."

[5] Torah.

[6] Incense. Comp. *Aen.*, i. 416–17. "And a hundred altars glow with Sabæan incense." Frankincense, or incense, was a gum obtained from the large timber trees known as Boswellia. They grow in India, but the genuine incense was obtained from a species found only in South Arabia and Somali Land. The "sweet cane" should be "the fine-scented cane," brought either from Arabia or India, perhaps through Egypt, and burnt with the incense for the sake of its rich perfume. The Septuagint, for "sweet cane," has "cinnamon." "Weihrauch," Schenkel's *Bib. Lex.* Tristram's *Nat. Hist. of Bible*, pp. 355, 485.

[7] Bredenkamp, *Gesetz und Propheten*, p. 103, calls attention to this verse, as shewing that in Josiah's day the Jews zealously observed the ceremonial law of sacrifice and offering. They offered sacrifices, in the thought that these would atone for wickedness in which they still persisted. To explain away this, the new critics venture an arbitrary conjecture that the Law mentioned in the 19th verse, did not include the ceremonial laws: that these, in fact, were not known till much later! The uselessness of ceremonial, apart from morality, is often urged by the prophets. 1 Sam. xv. 22. Isa. i. 11. Hos. vi. 6. Amos v. 21. Mic. vi. 6. Ps. l. 8, etc. But its condemnation implies its being practised. How then could it be only an invention of the time after the Exile, as the new criticism maintains?

blocks before this people,[1] and the fathers and sons shall together fall over them; the neighbour and his friend shall perish. 22. Thus saith Jehovah, Behold, a people comes from the North; and a great nation will rise up from the farthest parts of the earth. 23. They lay hold of bow and javelin; they are cruel and have no mercy; their voice roars like the sea: they ride on horses. Their army is arrayed for battle, against thee, O daughter of Zion!"

The people of Judah and Jerusalem will be alarmed even at the report of the approach of such a foe; but the prophet can give them no comfort. In that day they will say:

"24. 'We have heard the report (of his approach). Our arms hang powerless; anguish has seized us: trembling, like that of a woman in travail! 25. Go not forth to the open country, and do not walk on the common road; for the sword of the enemy makes terror on every side.' 26. O daughter of my people, tie a robe of sackcloth round thee; roll thyself in ashes; make thee lamentation as for an only son—the bitterest wailing! For the spoiler will come on us suddenly!"

Jehovah now speaks, reassuring Jeremiah that he will support him in his Divine commission.

"27. I have set thee[2] as an assayer, or tester, among My people, that thou mayest know and try their way, and (whilst thou doest so, I will keep thee), as a strong fortress, (from harm).[3] 28. They are, all, the worst of revolters; going hither and thither to slander:[4] copper and iron are they, (not gold); they are all evil doers. 29. (No judgments sent for their good have reformed them. I have laboured with them as a purifier labours at the furnace, with metal that proves worthless.[5]) The bellows have been blown till they are scorched; the lead (added as a flux, to bring away the slack) is burned (into fumes); the refiner has tried to smelt the metal in vain; (the dross—that is,) the wicked—cannot be separated (from what little silver there is)![6] 30. Call the whole people, therefore, 'reprobate silver,' for Jehovah has rejected them."

[1] The invasion of the enemy.
[2] Jer. vi. 22 30.
[3] See chap. i. 18.
[4] Chap. ix. 4.
[5] "A kuli came and formed a little furnace close to the verandah, by lighting a very small fire of charcoal, making a hole about two feet distant, for the nose of his bellows, which were of the skin of a goat, with a slit at the back which he alternately opened and closed, and connecting the bellows and fire by a little underground passage." *Six Years in India*, p. 93.
[6] This is a paraphrase of a difficult passage.

The brevity of Eastern popular addresses of any kind forbids the thought that lengthy compositions, such as the above, were delivered at one time, as a connected whole. Jeremiah, himself, indeed, tells us, that his prophecies, spoken in the reign of Josiah and subsequently, were inscribed on a roll in the fourth year of Jehoiakim,[1] that is, in the year B.C. 606,[2] when the good king had been dead three or four years. Nor did the prophet himself write them out. His friend Baruch, of the noble house of Neriah, a man skilled in caligraphy and famous for general culture,[3] "wrote from his mouth, on a roll of a book, all the words of Jehovah which He had spoken to him,"[4] and, when this copy had been destroyed by Jehoiakim, made a second, at the prophet's dictation, "adding, besides, to them, many like words."[5] It is impossible, therefore, to say what portion of any long discourse in the Book, as it now stands, was spoken at a particular time. We can only reproduce them as they are given, with the general knowledge that they were uttered on various occasions during Josiah's reign.

[1] Jer. xxxvi. 1, 2.
[2] B.C. 603. *Dict. of Bible*, art. "Baruch."
[3] Jos., *Ant.*, X. vi. 2.
[4] Jer. xxxvi. 4–18.
[5] Jer. xxxvi. 32.

CHAPTER IX.

JUDAH UNDER JOSIAH.

THE first steps towards the abolition of idolatry, and the formal re-establishment of Jehovah-worship, had preceded the "call" of Jeremiah[1] by about a year. Zephaniah, and perhaps other prophets whose names have perished, had quickened the tender conscience of Josiah, and strengthened the hands of the survivors of the great persecution, who now zealously strove to restore the ancient faith, amidst almost overwhelming difficulties. In the East, however, the personal action of the monarch is decisive in all public action; the community, as a rule, passively submitting to the royal will. All change, in fact, must be initiated by the ruler; his word is the only law; obedience alone is the part of subjects.

In the year B.C. 630, then—five years before Nabopolassar, father of Nebuchadnezzar, founded the independent monarchy of Babylon,[2] so soon to destroy Judah—the work of reformation had been begun by Josiah, now a young man of twenty. Jerusalem and Judah were, naturally, the first field of activity.[3] No sentimental tenderness for art or old associations mitigated the earnestness of the religious revolution.[4] The stately high places were levelled with the

[1] B.C. 627. [2] Smyth's *Assyria*, p. 149. [3] 2 Chron. xxxiv. 3.

[4] I would here enter my earnest protest against the worship of art which now reigns in the ecclesiastical world. Beauty and taste are becoming, in the House and Service of God; but the passion for colour and form, in every detail of the church and its services, has become a national calamity by its excess. The dress of the

ground; the Asherahs, the marble and molten images of the gods, utterly destroyed; the altars of the various Baals, with the obelisks, or sun images, beside them, broken down in the presence of the king.[1] There are no fewer than twenty words in Hebrew for idols; a proof of the number and variety of these abominations, then worshipped over the land. Utterly and permanently to defile the idolatrous holy places, Josiah caused the bones of the dead idol-priests to be taken from their graves, and burnt on the altars at which they had ministered; a violation of the sanctity of the grave unprecedented in Jewish history, and bitterly condemned by the prophet Amos when committed by the heathen king of Moab.[2] Nor was this vigorous action confined to Judah or Jerusalem. Assyria, now torn and weakened, almost to its fall, by rebellions and wars in the East, had left the territory of the Ten Tribes unoccupied, and

minister, not the truth he proclaims; the artistic rendering of the service, not its solemn words: the mediævalism of the sacred building in every particular, not the holy use for which it is designed, are most on the tongues of men.

St. Bernard was right in saying that "the immense height of the churches, their immoderate length, superfluous breadth, costly polishing and strange designs, while they attract the eyes of the worshipper, hinder the devotion of the soul, and somehow remind me of the old Jewish ritual!

"Early Christians, English Puritans, Cistercian mediæval monks, and modern Reformers of an earnest type, agree on one point, however much they may differ on others, namely, that people who are filled with practical sincerity, are apt to pass by Art with indifference, or reject it with anger." Morrison's *St. Bernard*, p. 149.

"The more I have examined the subject," says John Ruskin, "the more dangerous have I found it to dogmatize respecting the character of the Art which is likely, at a given period, to be most useful to the cause of religion. One great fact first meets me. I never met with a Christian whose heart was thoroughly set upon the world to come, and, so far as human judgment could pronounce, was perfect and right before God, *who cared about Art at all.*" *Stones of Venice*, vol. ii. p. 103.

"'May the Devil fly away with the Fine Arts,' exclaimed, confidentially, once, in my hearing, one of our most distinguished public men; a sentiment that often recurs to me. A public man, intent on any real business, does, I suppose, find the Fine Arts rather imaginary, feels them to be a pretentious nothingness; a confused superfluity and nuisance, purchased with cost; what he, in brief language, denominates a bore." Carlyle, *Latter Day Pamphlets*, *Jesuitism*, p. 34.

[1] 2 Chron. xxxiv. 4. [2] Amos ii. 1.

Josiah had virtually resumed possession of it. Bands of official iconoclasts were therefore sent through the ancient bounds of Manasseh and Ephraim, the central tribes, and even as far as Naphtali on the extreme north, and Simeon on the far south, below Judah. And it is remarkable that carved figures on rocks have never, as yet, been found south of Kana, near Tyre, while there are no traces of the dolmens, cromlechs, and other forms of stone altars, so common east of the Jordan. Idolatry had everywhere taken root. The mixed population of the still ruined towns[1] of the old Northern Kingdom—a heathen medley brought from distant countries by the Assyrian king, with a remnant of the Jewish tribes—worshipped a multitude of vile foreign gods. Nor were even the shepherds of the Negeb, the territory of the Simeonites, less corrupted. Pure Jewish communities no doubt remained here and there even in the north, who clung to the faith of their fathers, but with such local exceptions, the old religion of the nation had well-nigh vanished from the land. Every idolatrous symbol was now, however, destroyed, and in appearance, at least, the country returned to the national faith.

Some particulars of this great revolution are fortunately preserved. In Jerusalem, the purification of the temple was intrusted to Hilkiah, the high priest, and his deputy,[2] with a body of ordinary priests, and the Levite officials who had charge of the sacred gates. The sanctuary had been turned, by Manasseh and Amon, into the headquarters of Baal worship—a famous image, known as "the Baal," being set up in it, with an Asherah and symbols of "all the host

[1] 2 Chron. xxxiv. 6. The words, "with their mattocks round about," should be read, "in their ruins round about." The towns in parts of the land laid waste by Shalmaneser, had, for the most part, remained in ruins ever since.

[2] 2 Kings xxiii. 5.

of heaven," close by.[1] Everything connected with these supreme abominations was removed from the temple precincts—their altars, statues, vestments, and holy vessels. All that was destructible was carried down to the Kedron valley, outside the walls, and burned: the ashes being collected for the special purpose of defiling the high places. A special order of priests, the Chemarim,[2] clad in black, in contrast to the white robe of the priests of Jehovah, had burned incense under Ahaz, Manasseh, and Amon, on the idolatrous Bamoth, or high places, in the towns of Judah and round Jerusalem. Others had performed the same office on the altars of Baal, the sun, the moon, the planets, or perhaps the signs of the zodiac,[3] and of all the host of heaven. These Josiah simply suppressed.[4] The Asherah set up again by Amon in the temple, after having been removed by Manasseh, was dragged outside the walls, as an object of peculiar detestation, to the deep ravine of the Kedron, and burned: any fragments left being stamped to powder and strewn over the graves in the public cemetery, to desecrate them by contact with the dead.[5] It was a repetition of the intense abhorrence of idolatry shewn in David's burning the gods of the Philistines,[6] and in the treatment of the golden calf by Moses:[7] the command enjoining it occurring in Deuteronomy.[8]

Associated with the Asherah in the temple, were numbers

[1] 2 Kings xxiii. 4. For "the priests of the second order," read as in the text.
[2] 2 Kings xxiii. 4. [3] Zeph. i. 4. Hos. x. 5.
[4] Hebrew, Mazzaloth = Arabic, Menazil the houses of the twelve signs of the heavens, in which, successively, the sun was supposed to dwell. Gesenius. *Thes.*, p. 869; Delitzsch, *Hiob*, on xxxviii. 32.
[5] 2 Kings xxiii. 6. See Wilkins' *Israel and Phenicia*, p. 162. Jer. xxvi. 23.
[6] 1 Chron. xiv. 12. [7] Exod. xxxii. 20.
[8] Deut. vii. 25. As the "Book of the Law" was not yet discovered in the temple, the course taken by Josiah must have been, like that of David, determined from other sources; that is, both David and Josiah must have known this part of the Law.

of slaves of both sexes,[1] consecrated to immorality in connection with the Asherah; their gains passing to its priests, whose slaves they were. The men, it would seem, wandered at times over the land, in the service of vice; the women busied themselves by day in weaving hangings for the Asherah, and tents for its nightly orgies. Both they and the Galli[2] associated with them, lived in the temple and its precincts; but the places they had occupied were now pulled down, and the spot purified from every trace of their presence.

Numbers of Israelitish priests, during the long reign of idolatry, had so far apostatized as to burn incense on the high places, from Geba, near Michmash, to Beersheba, in the far south of the Negeb. These were brought to Jerusalem, but not allowed to officiate at the altar of Jehovah. They were also kept distinct from the members of their order who had remained true to the old faith, but were permitted to receive their priestly maintenance from the "holy bread;" eating it, however, at home with their families, as defiled priests,[3] not in the temple with their "clean" brethren. Perhaps, however, they were allowed to discharge subordinate duties in the temple.[4]

High places with altars had been built at different gates of Jerusalem, consecrated, perhaps, to the supposed hairy demons of the wilderness.[5] These, like all others, were broken down. Tophet, "the spitting,"[6] or abhorrence, in the Valley of Hinnom, under the walls of Jerusalem, was

[1] They were the "sacred slaves" of the Asherah, the Kedaishim (mas.), and the Kedaishoth (fem.). See p. 32 and vol. iii. p. 399.

[2] See p. 32 and vol. iii. p. 399.

[3] Lev. xxi. 17-22. How was this law, as to defiled priests, known *then*, if Leviticus dates only from the Exile?

[4] Thenius, on 2 Kings xxiii. 9. [5] Geiger. Graetz, vol. ii. p. 287. See p. 96

[6] Gesenius, *Thes.*, p. 1497. Other etymologies are given, but this seems the best.

carefully defiled, to prevent its ever again being used for human sacrifices. The sacred white horses of the sun,[1] given to the Sun-god by Ahaz, Manasseh, and Amon, and stalled in the cells[2] on the west of the temple forecourt, where the street ran up to it from the town[3]—cells, named after Nethanmelech, a well-known official,[4] perhaps their founder or builder—were taken away, and the chariots they drew in the festal processions of the Sun-god, were burned.[5] Altars in honour of the host of heaven[6] had been raised by the late idolatrous kings on the top of the Aliyeh, or roof-chamber, built by Ahaz, perhaps on the flat roof of the temple,[7] and the altars built by Manasseh in both its forecourts shared the fate of all others, being broken down and thrown on the water of Kedron, after being reduced to dust.[8]

But now came a still more decisive blow at the traditions and corruptions of the past. Solomon had built various high places round Jerusalem, nearly four hundred years before—partly to please the many heathen princesses of his

[1] Horses were sacred to the sun among the Armenians, Persians, Ethiopians, Greeks, and Assyrians, and were sacrificed to the Sun-god.

[2] Very likely storehouses for material used in the temple worship. 1 Chron. ix. 26. Neh. x. 38.

[3] The word translated suburbs in A.V., is Parvarim, sing. Parvar, identical with Porbar, 1 Chron. xxvi. 18. I have followed Keil's rendering of its meaning. Gesenius (*Thes.*, p. 1123) thinks it was a portico to a summer-house or open kiosk. But Böttcher fancies it was an open space, like a suburb. The Talmud translates a related word by "suburbs—places near a city." In their *Aehrenlese*, vol. ii. p. 113, Böttcher and Mühlau render the words before this: "He took away the horses, so that they should not enter into the House of Jehovah."

[4] A.V., the chamberlain; literally "eunuch," thence "a court official," though not a eunuch.

[5] 2 Kings xxiii. 11.

[6] Ewald, *Gesch.*, vol. iii. pp. 664, 667.

[7] Thenius. Keil. Zeph. i. 5. Jer. xix. 13; xxxii. 29. There were buildings over some of the gates of the temple. Jer. xxxv. 4.

[8] In 2 Kings xvi. 18, the words, "covert for the Sabbath," should, in Geiger's opinion, be read, "molten images of the Shame"—*i.e.*, of Baal. They, too, were the fruit of the reign of Ahaz.

harem, but still more, perhaps, as an apparently inevitable concession to the multitude of foreigners frequenting the city in his day, many of them being Jewish subjects, and intercourse with them being doubtless large, for trade and other purposes. Respect for the great name of the wise king had hitherto kept them intact; even Hezekiah, as we have seen, not feeling strong enough to brave the prejudices of his people, by destroying them. All, however, now went down before the wave of religious enthusiasm. The citizens of Jerusalem no longer saw, on the south crest of Mount Olivet, or the other heights near at hand, the memorials of Ashtoreth, the goddess of Sidon, or Chemosh, or Milcom, the national gods of Moab and Ammon.[1] The Matzaiboth, or sacred stone pillars round them and their Asherahs, shared the general destruction: the very sites of each high place being polluted with human bones from the neighbouring graves. The destruction and desecration of the great sanctuary of the Northern Kingdom, at Bethel, was apparently the last act in this crusade against idolatry. All the buildings connected with it were utterly destroyed;[2] their very stones broken in small pieces, and the Asherah burnt,[3] under the eyes of Josiah himself. Three hundred and fifty years had passed since Jeroboam had permanently shattered the religious unity of Israel, by building the rival temple, now laid in ruins; but the golden calf he had set up in it, as a symbol of Jehovah, had been carried off, a hundred years before Josiah, by the Assyrians, under Shalmaneser, as that at Dan had been by Tiglath-pileser II. Since then, worship had been maintained by priests selected without reference to

[1] Milcom, the Ammonite deity, was also worshipped in Cyprus, as we learn from the famous Phœnician Cypriote inscription of Idalia, where his name in Cypriote is spelled Mi-le-ko-ne. [2] 2 Kings xxiii. 19,

[3] Wilkins' *Phenicia and Israel*, p. 153.

their race, with a ritual taught at first by one sent for the purpose from Assyria;[1] the worship of Jehovah, as the local God, being associated with that of the idols of Assyria and of the various foreign heathen communities settled in the country by the conquerors.[2] As the fountain-head of the apostasy of their Northern brethren, and the long-detested rival of the Temple of Jerusalem, this great sanctuary was the object of special abhorrence to the reformers. The skeletons of its priests, in ancient rock tombs below the hill, were dragged from their resting-places, and forthwith burnt on the altar, to pollute it forever; an incident, it was noticed, wonderfully fulfilling the curse pronounced by the prophet who had appeared at Bethel, three hundred and fifty years before, when the sanctuary was inaugurated by Jeroboam. The denunciation had not been forgotten; and the tombstone[3] marking the common grave of the prophet and that of his brother seer who came to him from Samaria, were still pointed out in the valley.[4] Their bones alone were left undisturbed.

It would have been well if violence had been limited to the buildings and altars connected with idolatry. But the recollection of the persecution by Jezebel in the north, and by Manasseh in the south, was still fresh, and had kindled a natural, but unhappy, thirst for revenge. A counter persecution was the result. While the priests of the high places in Judah, in deference to their descent from Aaron, had been only degraded; those of the Northern high places, men of all races, were everywhere ruthlessly slain on the very altars at which they had officiated;[5] a step as impolitic

[1] 2 Kings xvii. 28. [2] 2 Kings xvii. 33.
[3] For "title," 2 Kings xxiii. 17, read "tombstone."
[4] 1 Kings xiii. 31. 2 Kings xxiii. 17, 18.
[5] 2 Kings xxiii. 20.

as it was cruel, since it infuriated the heathen party in Judah, and tended to provoke the reaction which set in after Josiah's death.

It is striking to find no notice of Jeremiah's name during the years in which this religious revolution was being carried out. Yet he was busily preaching all the while; a lengthy section of his prophecies, extending from the seventh to the tenth chapter of his Book, containing a condensed epitome of his addresses at this time.[1] The first of these seems to have been delivered at a temple service, to which multitudes had been attracted from all parts of Judah; the prophet seizing an opportunity so favourable of pressing home his earnest words, once more, on his fellow-countrymen. The energy of Josiah, the zeal of the reforming priests, and the exhortations of the prophets, had produced a great outward change. The temple, which had been allowed to fall into partial ruin under Manasseh, was again the centre of the ancient faith, and became more than ever the boast and superstitious trust of the nation. Having no moral basis for their heathen worship, which virtually regarded one god as good as another, or, at least, as worth a trial, nothing was more natural than that the multitude should pass readily from the idol altars to that of Jehovah. Indeed, temporary adoptions of one god rather than another had necessarily been familiar, where such a multitude of deities—as numerous, in the case of Judah, as its towns—offered such rival claims to devotion. Many forms of worship, ceremonial, and sacrifice, had been crowded into Jerusalem under Ahaz, Manas-

[1] So Hitzig and Keil. Others think these chapters should be referred to the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim; but, as Knobel well says, the chronological sequence of Jeremiah's discourses is, confessedly, very uncertain. *Prophetismus*, vol. ii. p 275.

seh, and Amon; the priests of each divinity having special books of their own rites, as was the case at Rome.[1] As in all other idolatrous countries, moreover, and in accordance with the very genius of heathenism, ritual constituted the soul and essence of religion. Formula and ceremony were omnipotent, and were held to compel the gods to accede to the desires of their votaries, if neither priest nor worshipper had vitiated them by error or omission.[2] While, therefore, even in the darkest times, the worship of Jehovah, as one of many gods, had never ceased, it would be a misconception of the fundamental ideas of the time, to suppose that the prominence assigned to Him in the public services under Josiah, implied an intelligent appreciation of His superiority to the gods He had for the time displaced. Nor is it possible to imagine even a passing enthusiasm for Jehovah, in that day, without minute and exact forms in His worship: for, to repeat what has just been said, the Jew, like all other peoples in antiquity, considered rites, in themselves, the beginning and end of religion; as every page of the prophets shews. To argue, therefore, that the Levitical ritual is of a very late origin, because Jehovah was always worshipped, more or less, by the Hebrews—while little is said of that ritual till the revulsion of national feeling against all idolatry, during the Captivity, brought it prominently to the front—is in violent contradiction to the ideas of those ages. It may have been corrupted by foreign admixtures, but that it existed and was more or less minutely observed, is implied in the very fact of Jehovah being worshipped at all, for each god had *his own ritual*, without which, according to the notions of the times, no worship whatever *could* be rendered to him.

[1] Döllinger's *Gentile and Jew*, vol. ii. p. 15.

[2] *Ibid.*, vol. ii. p. 16.

Himself intensely religious in the truest sense, such a hollow and nominal recognition of the national faith was intensely abhorrent to Jeremiah. To him, the only proof of fidelity to God was a life governed by His fear, while to the community, as to other heathen peoples, religion was one thing and morality another, quite distinct. Jehovah, they held, was bound to be their Protector, if they duly and punctiliously observed the rites of His worship prescribed by His priests. To Jeremiah, the condition of His favour was the leading a godly life, in reverent and loving obedience to His moral law; ritual being important only as an outward expression of the religious affections. Taking his stand, therefore, at one of the gates of the temple, on an occasion when its courts were thronged by worshippers, he addressed them as follows, denouncing first their empty formalism and their dependence on lying prophets:

"VII. 2. Hear the word of Jehovah,[1] ye who enter at these gates from all Judah to pray before Him. 3. Thus saith Jehovah of Hosts, the God of Israel: Amend your ways and doings, and I will let you continue to dwell in this place![2] 4. Put no trust in the words of the lying prophets, who say, 'These (buildings) are the temple of Jehovah, the temple of Jehovah, the temple of Jehovah'[3] (as if the temple in itself, as the shrine of the present God, were enough to protect you from national danger! It will *not* keep you from the exile threatened by God). 5. But, if ye thoroughly amend your ways and your doings; if ye honestly do what is right between man and man; 6. if ye do not oppress the stranger, the fatherless and the widow;[4] if ye shed no innocent blood in this place (Jerusalem), and do not walk after other gods, to your hurt—7. then I will let you

[1] **Jer. vii. 2-7.** [2] Deut. vii. 12–15.

[3] Repeated for emphasis: perhaps also in the fanatical excitement which marks Eastern religions. It may be compared with the cries of the priests of Baal on Carmel (1 Kings xviii. 26), or with the frenzy into which the dervishes of Islam work themselves, by the repetition of "Allah! Allah!" Stanley's *Jewish Church*, vol. ii. p. 254.

[4] **Exod. xxii. 21. Deut. xxiv. 17.**

dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, for ever and ever.

"8. Behold,[1] you put your trust in lying words, which are worse than worthless. 9. (What!) will ye steal, murder, commit adultery, perjure yourselves: burn incense to Baal, and walk after other gods whom ye do not know,[2] 10. and (then) come and enter into My presence, in this house, which is called by My name, and say, 'we are safe from all danger: we may without risk practise all these abominations!' 11. Is this house, which is called by My name, a den of robbers in your eyes?[3] I, even I, have seen this, says Jehovah.

"12. But go ye to My place[4] at Shiloh,[5] where I set My name at the first, and see what I did to it, for the wickedness of My people, Israel. 13. And now, because ye have done all these things, says Jehovah—and I spoke to you, rising up early[6] to do so, but ye did not listen; calling you, but you did not answer—14. therefore I will do to *this* house, which is called by My name, and in which you trust, and to this place—the land which I gave to you and to your fathers—as I did to Shiloh, 15. and cast *you* out of My sight as I cast out all your brethren, of Ephraim: (the people of the Northern Kingdom)!

"16. But thou (Jeremiah) do not pray for this people, neither lift up cry nor supplication for them, and do not entreat Me for them, for I will not hear thee! 17. Seest thou not what they do in the towns of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? 18. The sons[7] gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead dough to make cakes to (the moon) the queen of heaven,[8] and pour out drink offerings to other gods, to cause Me grief. 19. But will they really cause Me grief? says Jehovah; will they not rather bring shame on their own faces? 20. Therefore, thus saith the Lord Jehovah, Behold! My anger and My fury shall be poured out on this place

[1] **Jer. vii. 8–11.**

[2] Exod. xx. 2-17, a reference to the Ten Commandments.

[3] Matt. xxi. 13. Mark xi. 17. Luke xix. 46. [4] **Jer. vii. 12-15.**

[5] See vol. iii. pp. 48, ff. Shiloh was burnt by the Philistines.

[6] An allusion to the Eastern habit of rising early, while it is yet cool. The early morning is the most active time in the East. The people of India rise before daybreak. Bishop Heber copied them, rising and going out with Mrs. Heber for a ride, at 4 A.M. By 6 A.M. the sun was oppressively hot. *Journal*, vol. i. pp. 26, 101.

[7] **Jer. vii. 18-22.**

[8] These cakes were probably like those offered at Athens, at the full moon of the month Munychion, to the goddess Artemis. They were round, and had lights stuck in them. Graf. They were apparently of flour mixed with oil—perhaps spiced. Our hot-cross buns have been traced, by some, to them.

(Jerusalem); on man and beast, on the trees of the field, and the fruit of the ground; and it shall burn and not be quenched."

The moral law had always taken precedence of the ceremonial, in the sight of God, but this had never been realized by Israel. He now, once more, proclaims the fact in the strongest language.

"21. Thus saith Jehovah of Hosts,[1] the God of Israel, Take your whole burnt offerings (sacred to Me, and therefore to be tasted by none), and eat them like your ordinary sacrifices (which, except the small share for the altar and the priest, you yourselves eat. Use them like common flesh! You need not burn them on the altar.[2] As long as your life is so unworthy, you may eat them all!) 22. For I did not speak to your fathers, and I did not give them commands, in the day when I brought them out of the land of Egypt, (simply) that they might offer burnt offerings[2] and sacrifices,[3] 23. but (before I gave any laws

[1] Jer. vii. 21-23. [2] Chap. vi. 20.

[3] In Deut. iv. 21, the same words translated "concerning," in Jer. vii. 22, are rendered, with the pronoun, "for your sakes." So in Gen. xx. 11, "for the sake of," and repeatedly "because of;" see Gen. xii. 17; xx. 18; xliii. 18; Exod. viii. 12: etc. Smend, a leader among the new critics, explains the passage thus: "Jeremiah says that Jehovah had spoken to the Israelites, and given them counsels, less with the view to their offering sacrifices to Him than that they should obey Him." *Moses apud Prophetas*, p. 34. A correct paraphrase of the verse would be: "I did not give them commands to the end that they should offer sacrifices to Me (though this also was to be done); My supreme object was that they should obey Me." See Bredenkamp, pp. 108, ff. This verse has been represented by the new school of critics, as proving that sacrifice was unknown in the Mosaic age, and that the Levitical books of the Old Testament could not have existed in Jeremiah's day. But (1) Jeremiah expressly notices regularly instituted sacrifices, chaps. vi. 20; vii. 21; xiv. 12; xvii. 26; xxxiii. 18; so does Amos v. 22; so, Mic. vi. 6, 7. See, besides, Ps. xl. 6; l. 8; li. 19; Isa. i. 11.

(2) The constant condemnation of merely formal sacrifice unaccompanied by a fitting moral condition on the part of the offerer, implies a long-established practice. Even Isaiah and the prophets before him, recognize it thus. Joel, whom so extreme a critic as Reuss (*Les Prophètes.*—Introd.) accepts as the earliest of the prophets, speaks of sacrifices and of priests, etc., chap. i. 13. See also Reuss, *Gesch. d. Heil. Schrift. d. A. T.*, 1881, p. 243.

(3) The fact that Jeremiah constantly appeals to Deuteronomy—supposed by the new critics to have been written very shortly before its discovery in the eighteenth year of Josiah—proves that he had no idea of saying that sacrifices did not exist in the early days of the nation, for they are alluded to in Deut. xii. 6; xi. 13; xiv. 27;

respecting these), I commanded them saying, 'Obey My voice,[1] and I will be your God, and ye shall be My people, and walk in all the way which I have commanded you, that it may be well with you.'[2] 24. But they hearkened not,[3] and did not incline their ear, but walked in the counsels and stubbornness of their wicked heart, and turned their back to Me, not their face. 25. From the day that your fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt, to this day, I have sent you all My servants, the prophets; zealously sending them day by day.[4] 26.

and are there enforced or noticed by Moses himself, with his own lips, as one of his institutions.

(4) The words of Jer. vii. 22, are, in fact, in great measure a quotation from Deut. xxix. 12; Exod. vi. 7.

The number of passages already quoted which speak of sacrifices might be largely increased: see *e.g.* Isa. lxvi. 3; 1 Sam. xv. 22; Prov. xxi. 27. All these, and the others given before, have the same idea as the text, Jer. vii. 22, that the whole Levitical economy, as such, is of no value apart from morality on the part of the worshipper. The prophet, and the whole Old Testament, in fact, are at one, in denying any sacramental efficacy to a mere rite. They deny that it has any spiritual worth whatever, simply in itself. The act of the priest conferred no benefit on the offerer, except when it was the outward sign of inward spiritual grace. But that is very different from saying that sacrifice had not been instituted.

Keil's remarks are good: "Obey (hear) My voice, etc.," reminds us at once of Exod. xix. 5, and Exod. vi. 7: Lev. xxvi. 12; Deut. xxvi. 18. The phrase, "in all the way, etc.," occurs only once again in Scripture, and that in Deut. v. 33. Jeremiah had clearly in his mind the promulgation of the Decalogue from Sinai, and in this, written by the finger of God, there is no reference to whole burnt offerings or sacrifices. The sense must be, "God did not, in making the covenant with Israel, speak respecting matters of whole burnt offering and sacrifice—but." *Commentar über Jeremia*, p. 121: Oehler, in Herzog, vol. xii. p. 228. Dr. E. G. A. Riehm, one of the greatest living Biblical critics, says in reference to Jer. vii. 22: "The basis on which Jehovah had made a covenant with their fathers, when He led them from Egypt, was not the demand for offerings, but for their obedience. If they rendered *that*, He would be their God, and they His people. This agrees with Deuteronomy and with the representations of the other books of the Pentateuch. They make the covenant be concluded before the laws of sacrifice were delivered. It is impossible that Jeremiah did not know of a sacrificial legislation given by God at Sinai, or that no book about it should have existed, for Deuteronomy, which Jeremiah almost exclusively used, presupposes the existence of the Levitical Law. As Isaiah, in writing iv. 5, had undoubtedly before his mind Exod. xl. 38, so Jeremiah shews his acquaintance with the Levitical Laws. See Jer. ii. 3, compared with Lev. xxii. 10; xx. 16. Jer. xxxii. 7, compared with Lev. xxv. 25. Jer. xxxiv. 8, compared with Lev. xxv. 10, 40. His contemporary, Ezekiel, also, often shews the same acquaintance with the Levitical legislation. Ezek. iv. 14; xxii. 26, etc. *Studien und Kritiken*, 1868, pp. 369, ff.

[1] Exod. xix. 5. Lev. xxvi. 12.

[2] That is, the moral law preceded the ceremonial, as the more important, and the covenant relations between God and Israel were based on their obedience to it, and not on their exact observance of ceremonies and forms.

[3] Jer. vii. 21-26.

[4] Literally, "From the early morning, etc."

Yet they hearkened not to Me, nor inclined their ear, but stiffened their neck, refusing to bow to Me, and behaved worse than their fathers. 27. And even now, when thou (Jeremiah) speakest all these words to them, they will not listen to thee; when thou callest to them they will not answer thee. 28. Say, therefore, to them: 'This is the people that does not obey the voice of Jehovah their God, nor accept correction; fidelity to Him is gone;[1] it has died on their lips.'[2]

For such incurable apostasy and wickedness, Jehovah has finally cast off His rebellious people, and left them to perish in shame.

"29. Cut off thy hair (which is thy diadem),[3] (O daughter of Zion), and throw it away, and raise lamentations on the bare hills, for Jehovah has rejected and cast off the generation against which He is wroth. 30. For the children of Judah have done evil in My sight, says Jehovah;[4] they have set up their abominations in the House which is called by My name, to pollute it. 31. And they have built the high altars of the Tophet, in the valley of Benhinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire; which I commanded them not, neither came it into My heart.

"32. Therefore behold the days come,[5] says Jehovah, when men will no more say 'The Tophet,'[6] or the 'Valley of Benhinnom,'[7] but 'the Valley of Slaughter;' for (the scene of their crime will become that of their punishment, and the dead will be so many that they will have to

[1] Jer. v. 1.

[2] They still pretended fidelity, and gave lip homage—but it was hollow and worthless.

[3] This was a sign of mourning. Job i. 20. Mic. i. 16.

[4] The idol worship in verse 18 was private: that in this verse is public and official. But as Josiah had put down state idolatry in his twelfth year, B.C. 630, the state of things under Manasseh, which had never been repented of, must be referred to. In fact, heathenism appears to have broken out wherever possible, even after Josiah's Reformation, as seems hinted in verses 17, 18. In verse 18 they burn incense to the queen of heaven. The idols of Manasseh had been put back, after his death, into the temple 2 Kings xxi. 7; 2 Chron. xxxiii. 7; and the high places, which had been levelled with the ground (2 Kings xxiii.), had been rebuilt (vii. 30, 31) to propitiate the wrath of Moloch, by offerings of children, as often happened in times of great public danger (2 Kings iii. 27; Mic. vi. 6, 7); a worship which repeated all the sins of the past (Jer. xxxii. 35). The whole passage seems to hint at popular tumults and reactions, under Josiah, to reinstate idolatry.

[5] Jer. vii. 27-32. [6] Isa. xxx. 33.

[7] Hinnom is derived by Jarchi from Naham, "to groan," but it occurs as early as Josh. xv. 8.

bury (them) even in Tophet (polluted though it be), for want of room elsewhere.[1] 33. (Ay, more than this! Many will have to be left unburied, the last and deepest calamity to a Jew.) The corpses of this people will be meat for the birds of heaven, and for the wild beasts of the earth, and no one will scare them away! 34. And I will cause the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, to cease from the towns of Judah, and from the streets of Jerusalem, for they shall be made a desolation. VIII. 1. (When the enemy invades you, moreover), saith Jehovah, they (will desecrate the graves, in search of the costly ornaments and relics buried with the dead,[2] and) will take the bones of the kings of Judah, and the bones of her princes, and the bones of the priests, and the bones of the prophets, and the bones of the citizens of Jerusalem, from their graves, 2. and they will scatter them (on the earth) before the sun and the moon, and all the host of heaven, whom they loved and served, and after whom they walked, and whom they sought and worshipped; they will not even be collected for burial, but will be like dung on the face of the earth. 3. And death will be chosen rather than life, by all the remnant of this evil race, who survive in all the parts to which I have driven them away, says Jehovah of Hosts."[3]

The prophet now breaks out afresh in his lament over the inveterate wickedness of his people, and the terribleness of the judgments impending over them.

"4. Thus says Jehovah: If one fall, will he not rise again? If he turn aside, will he never come back? 5. Why, then, does this people of Jerusalem turn away from Me in abiding apostasy, holding fast to delusion, refusing[4] to return? 6. I listened and heard, they speak what is not right—to no one is his wickedness a trouble, so that he should say, 'What have I done?' Every one presses on in the course he is running,[5] like the horse rushing to the battle. 7. Even the stork in the heavens knows her appointed times (to return

[1] The Valley of Benhinnom is rocky on both sides. It bounds Jerusalem on the west and south, running finally into the valley of the Kedron, which extended north and south on the east of the city. **Jer. vii. 33-viii. 7.**

[2] It was the habit to bury costly things with the dead, in Egypt. *Salv. de Saey* quoted by Hitzig, *Jeremia*, p. 66. So, elsewhere.

[3] See Lev. xxvi. 36-39. Deut. xxviii. 65-67.

[4] Literally, "loathing, scorning."

[5] Literally, "into his running."

from migration); the turtle dove, and the swift, and the crane, keep to the time of their reappearing;[1] but My people know not the law[2] of Jehovah. 8. How can ye then say, 'We are the wise, we have the law[3] of Jehovah'? Assuredly the false pen of the scribes[4] has acted deceitfully (for their written revelations, in opposition to those of the true prophets, are lies). 9. But 'the wise' will be ashamed, confounded, and caught! Lo, they have despised the word of Jehovah, and whose wisdom have they (if they have not His)? 10. I will, therefore, give their wives to others, their fields to new heirs; for, from the least to the greatest, they all seek after gain: from the prophet to the priest, they all deal falsely. 11. And (the false prophets) treat the wound of the daughter of My people as if it were slight, saying, 'All is well, All is well,' when all is wrong. 12. (The men of Judah should be ashamed for having done abomination, yet) they

[1] All these are migratory birds. The stork is not seen in winter, but abounds from the end of March to the beginning of May. It then passes on still further to the north. The turtle dove is seen only from spring to autumn. The appearance of the swallow marks the return of spring, as in England. The crane comes in the end of March or the beginning of April. **Jer. viii. 8-12.**

[2] Ordinance. [3] The Torah.

[4] The prophet complains of misstatement and falsification; not of the writing of new books of the law, of pretended Mosaic authorship. See Bredenkamp, p. 108. Keil, quoting Hitzig, thinks the law referred to by Jeremiah was undoubtedly the written law. But if they tried to falsify the law, no further proof is needed that it was already in existence, and that it is not of late date. Hitzig's words are: "The second half of the verse shews that the written law is meant, and that by the possession of this they think themselves wise; that is, think they know how to propitiate God and avert all danger. It is, however, the ceremonial law, by which they regulate public worship (see vii. 21) while the living word of Jehovah demands something else from them, vii. 3." See Isa. x. 1. See also Rosenmüller's *Scholia in Jerem.*, vol. i. p. 276. Jeremiah's constant reference to Deuteronomy, which, as will be shewn hereafter, is, throughout, based on the other legislative books of the Pentateuch, shews clearly that he, at least, did not believe that these were, any of them, fictions. The "scribes," as an order, did not rise till after the return from Babylon. Graetz says: "The prophet reproaches the people, or rather the kings, princes, priests, and false prophets, with having set up an abomination in the Temple, etc. (vii. 30), and thus acting entirely contrary to the law, while they yet maintained that they were wise, and had God's teaching. The conclusion of verse 9 is, 'they reject God's word, and what wisdom have they?' Therefore the prophet does not accuse them of falsifying the law, but attacks the boasting of those who pretend to know the law, and act contrary to it. In this sense must verse 8 be explained thus, 'The law has become vain,' or 'God has made it in vain,' 'a useless pen is the pen of the scribes' (who copy the law). The prophet therefore speaks ironically, not of the falsification of the law, but of its being made vain, since it is not practised. The law was in existence, scribes copied it and spread it, but it was not followed." *Geschichte*, vol. ii. p. 474.

are not at all ashamed, neither do they blush: therefore they will lie amongst the slain; they will fall in the time of their visitation, saith Jehovah.[1] 13. I will gather them and sweep them away, saith Jehovah, for there are no grapes on the vine, nor figs on the fig tree, and the leaf is faded: (My people yield no fruit to Me,) and I will give them to them who shall invade them."[2]

The terror created by the judgment soon to break ove. Judah, is now depicted.

"14. 'Why do we sit still?' (will they say.) 'Assemble yourselves, and let us enter the fortified towns and there die in the end[3] (rather than fall by the sword at once). For Jehovah our God has willed that we perish, and has given us poison-water[4] to drink, because we have sinned against Jehovah. 15. We hoped for good, but evil has come; for a time of healing, and, behold, terror! 16. The snorting of the enemy's horse is heard from Dan (in the far north); the whole land trembles at the neighing of his cavalry.[5] They come and consume the land, and all that is in it: the city, and those that dwell in it. 17. For, behold, I send among you (an army terrible as) serpents—great yellow vipers,[6] which cannot be charmed,[7] and they will bite you, saith Jehovah.

"18. O what can cheer[8] me in my sorrow! My heart in me is sick!

[1] De Wette. Jer. viii. 13-18.

[2] Literally, "pass over." Ewald renders this clause, "and I gave them what they have transgressed (the law)." Sachs, "and what I gave them passes away from them."

[3] Hitzig renders it "perish (through hunger and pestilence) rather than by the sword of the enemy." So Ewald, De Wette, Keil, Naegelsbach, Rosenmüller, Streane. Eichhorn, "lament in silence." Sachs, "be silent." So Noyes.

[4] Mai rosh, "poppy juice." Gesenius. Jeremiah uses the same words in viii. 14, and xxiii. 15. Rosh is the name of a poisonous plant. Deut. xxix. 18, margin, "a poisonful herb;" xxxii. 33, "venom." Job xx. 16, "poison." Hos. x. 4, "hemlock." In Deut. xxxii. 32, we learn that it had "grapes;" from Hos. x. 4, that it was a quick-growing weed of the corn-fields. It was evidently a bitter plant, from being often joined with wormwood (Deut. xxix. 18; Jer. ix. 15, etc.). It was most probably the poppy. Tristram, *N. H. of Bible*, p. 447. It is rendered "poison-water" by Ewald, Sachs, Naegelsbach; "water of hemlock," Noyes; "bitter water," Eichhorn; "poison," Hitzig. Streane thinks it was the deadly nightshade. The margin reads "poison."

[5] "Stallions" in the Hebrew. [6] Tristram.

[7] For a notice of serpent charmers in Palestine, see *Land and Book*, pp. 154, 155. A very full account of those in Barbary is given in Drummond Hay's *Western Barbary*, chap. ix.

[8] Literally, "brighten." Graf. Ewald.

19. Lo,[1] the cry of the daughter of My people sounds aloud from a far country. 'Is Jehovah not in Zion? Is her King not in her?' (But Jehovah will answer.) 'Why have they provoked Me to anger with their graven images, and with foreign idols?' 20. (Then the people will say.) 'The harvest is past, the fruit-gathering is ended, and we are not saved.'"

The deepest sorrow oppresses the prophet at the thought of the ruin of his people.

"21. By the destruction[2] of the daughter of My people, I myself

Interior of an Eastern Caravanserai.

am destroyed! I am in sadness:[3] horror has seized me! 22. Is there no balm in Gilead?[4] No physician there? Why then is no bandage applied to the wound of the daughter of My people?

[1] **Jer. viii. 19–22.** [2] Literally, "shattering, breaking in pieces."

[3] Literally, "I am black"—*i.e.*, I go about in the black unwashed robes of a mourner.

[4] The balm of Gilead was probably the produce of the opobalsamum, now cultivated at Mecca. Its native country seems to be the east coast of Africa. It was formerly grown with great care round Jericho, where Cleopatra had an imperial

"IX. 1. O that my head were waters, and my eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night, for the slain of the daughter of my people."

But the ruin of the kingdom is only the inevitable result of the wickedness of the people: that, above all, calls forth the deepest laments.

"IX. 2. O that I had[1] in the wilderness some poor shelter of wanderers;[2] I would leave my people and go from them, for they are all adulterers,[3] a band of treacherous men. 3. They bend their tongue as if it were their bow, (to shoot out) lies, and they do not rule honestly in the land: for they go on from wickedness to wickedness, and know not Me, says Jehovah. 4. Be on your guard, every one, against his neighbour, and trust not in any brother: for every brother is crafty as Jacob,[4] and every neighbour goes about to slander. 5. Every man deceives his neighbour, and, as to truth, they never speak it; they use their tongues to speak lies; they weary themselves in committing iniquity. 6. 'Thou dwellest (O Jeremiah),' says Jehovah, 'in the midst of faithlessness. Through faithlessness they refuse to know Me.'

"7. Therefore,[5] thus says Jehovah of Hosts, Behold, I will melt them (in the furnace), and try them (as metal is tried); for how else

guard set over the garden in which her balsam trees grew. Kneucker says it is indigenous to South Arabia, and that it is a plant of three or four feet high, evergreen, with fleshy white flowers the size of those of a pea. The balm flows, from punctures in the twigs, in thick drops, strongly aromatic, reminding one of the smell of turpentine, and of a bitter, astringent taste. At first colourless, it turns a pale yellow and even red. *Bib. Lex.*, art. "Balsam."

[1] **Jer. ix. 2-6.** In the Hebrew the 9th chapter begins with the 2d verse of the A. V.

[2] Ps. lv. 6, 7. Small "shelters," of only bare walls and a roof, are found—where indeed they are most needed—in the dreariest desert. Large "khans" enclose a square court, and are commonly only one story high, and of stone. Though not always clean or comfortable, their shelter is precious. The court, on the four sides of which the khan is built, is for cattle. There is always a well in the centre. Travellers can put their baggage or goods in the chambers of the building, which are, however, unfurnished, only the key and a sleeping mat being provided. But the green shade round the central well, or fountain, gives a soothing repose after the toils of the way through the desert. I have been in many. The word used here is rendered "inn" in Gen. xlii. 27; xliii. 21; Exod. iv. 24.

[3] In many cases literally so; in all, guilty of idolatry—*i.e.*, breach of the covenant between Israel and God, which is compared to that of marriage.

[4] "Is a thorough Jacob." *Speaker's Comment.* The Hebrew words are "Akob Yakob."

[5] **Jer. ix. 7-18.**

can I do with the daughter of My people? 8. Their slanderous tongue is a deadly arrow[1]—it speaks treacherously; with his mouth a man speaks peaceably to his neighbour, but in his heart he is plotting against him. 9. Shall I not visit them for such things? says Jehovah. Shall not My soul be avenged on such a nation as this?

"10. For the mountains will I raise a weeping and wailing: for the wilderness pasture grounds a lamentation, because they are burned up (with drought), so that no one passes over them, and the voice of the flocks is no longer heard; the birds of the air and the wild beasts are fled and gone! 11. (And Jehovah has said,) I will turn Jerusalem into heaps of ruins—a dwelling of jackals, and I will make the towns of Judah desolate, without an inhabitant. 12. Who is the (*truly*) 'wise man'?[2] he will understand this. Who is he to whom the mouth of Jehovah has spoken? he will make it known. Why is the country doomed to ruin—to be made desolate like the wilderness, so that none will pass through it? 13. Jehovah has made it known: Because they have forsaken My Law,[3] which I laid before them,[4] and have not obeyed My voice, nor walked in the Law,[5] 14. but have walked after the stubbornness of their heart, and after the Baals,[6] (whose worship) their fathers taught them; 15. therefore Jehovah of Hosts, the God of Israel, has said, Behold, I will feed them—even this people—on wormwood, and give them poison-water to drink. 16. I will scatter them among the nations whom neither they nor their fathers have known, and send the sword after them, till I have destroyed them.

"17. Consider, says Jehovah of Hosts, and call for the (public) mourning women, that they come; send for the best trained of them,[7] 18. and make haste to raise a wailing for us, that our eyes may run down with tears, and our eyelashes drip with weeping.[8] 19. For a

[1] Gesenius. [2] "Not one of those who call themselves so." Chap. viii. 8.
[3] Torah. [4] Deut. xxx. 11-14.
[5] A. V. "Therein." The gender of the Hebrew shews that *law*, not *voice*, is the antecedent.
[6] Used as a general name for their idols. [7] Literally, "the wise."
[8] The custom of hiring mourners is very ancient. Jeremiah alludes to it in chap. ix. 17, 18. Every particular in these verses is still observed at funerals. There are in every city and community, women exceedingly "cunning" in this business. These are always sent for, and stay in the house, ready, when a fresh company of sympathizers come in, to "make haste" and take up a wailing, that the newly come may the more easily unite their tears with those of the mourners. They know the domestic history of every one, and immediately strike up an impromptu lamentation, in which they introduce the names of those relatives who have recently died, touching some tender chord in every heart, and thus each one weeps for his own dead, and the performance, which would otherwise be difficult or impossible, becomes easy and

loud wailing sounds out of Zion! 'Oh, how are we laid waste and put to great shame! We must leave our native land! They have thrown down our dwelling-places!' 20. Hear, ye women, the word of Jehovah; let your ear receive the word of His mouth, and teach your daughters (a song of) wailing, and every one her neighbours (a dirge of) lamentation (for the hired mourning women will not suffice); 21. for death is come in through our lattice windows;[1] he comes into our loftiest houses;[2] he has already cut off the children in the lanes, and the young men in the streets.[3] 22. And the dead bodies of men shall fall on the open field, and lie there like dung, or like the handful dropped by the reaper, which no one picks up."

But now, once more, the prophet repeats his counsels as to the true course to be followed.

"23. Thus says Jehovah: [4] Let not 'the wise man' glory in his wisdom, or the strong in his strength, or the rich in his riches. 24. But rather let him that glories glory in this—that he understands and knows Me, that I am Jehovah, who exercise loving kindness, justice, and righteousness on the earth: for in these I delight, says Jehovah. 25. Behold, days come, says Jehovah, that I will punish all the circumcised who are only outwardly so [5] (and not in the heart). 26. Egypt and Judah and Edom, and the B'nai Ammon, and Moab, and all that have their hair shaved off at the corners, about the ears and temples,[6]—who live

natural. It is an aim with all to have a grand funeral for their dead, which implies the hiring of professional mourners, at an expense often beyond the means of the survivors. I was told in Cairo, however, that this form of ostentatious folly is dying out. Funeral feasts have been common in most nations, in all ages. The reader may remember the feast at the death of old Ravenswood, in "The Bride of Lammermoor."

[1] The doors are kept shut fast in times of mortal sickness, and therefore death, like a thief, has clambered up and entered through the window.

[2] Literally, "palaces."

[3] The words "Speak, Thus saith the Lord," ver. 22, are omitted by Septuagint, Ewald, and Graf. If retained, they may be translated "Declare it, saith Jehovah."

[4] **Jer. ix. 23-26.**

[5] Ewald rightly renders the words, "the uncircumcised circumcised." Keil also gives the true meaning, as in the text. **Jer. ix. 24-26.**

[6] Keil, "with hair cut at the corners." The rendering in the text is that of Gesenius, followed by most. In Lev. xix. 27, it is said, "Ye shall not round off (cut in a circle) the extremity of your beard and hair; nor shalt thou shave the extremity (corner) of thy beard." Lev. xxi. 5 says, "Nor shall they shave off the extreme corner of their beard." The Mohammedans in the East trim the corners of the beard; the Jews do not. The words in the text are literally "clipped as to the locks." This is said, apparently in contempt, of the Arabs of the desert, whom Herodotus describes (iii. 8) as wearing their hair cut in this way. The tribe referred to, it would seem,

in the wilderness; for all the heathen are uncircumcised, and so, also, the whole House of Israel[1] is uncircumcised in heart."

Josiah was doing his utmost to cleanse the land from every trace of idolatry, but the hearts of the people responded faintly to his efforts. Their fathers and themselves had yielded to every form of superstition, and it was impossible to eradicate these at once. Jeremiah, therefore, again tries to shew them the folly of the heathen practices they cherished.

"X. 1. Hear the word that Jehovah speaks to you, O House of Israel.[2] 2. Thus says Jehovah! Do not conform to the way of the heathen, and be not terrified at the signs of the heavens, because the heathen (falling on their faces) are terrified at them.[3] 3. For the ways of the heathen nations are folly. For an idol is (only a block of wood) cut from a tree in the *yaar;*[4] the work of the hands of the wood-carver, (shaping it) with his axe. 4. It is covered with plates of silver and gold (to adorn it), and then fastened with nails and hammers, to keep it steady. 5. It stands stiff and immoveable as a scare-crow in a

from chap. xlix. 32, compared with ver. 28, belonged to the Kedarenes, who were descendants of Ishmael. Gen. xxv. 13. In Homer, *Iliad*, ii. 542, the Abantes are said to comb back their hair and let it hang behind. It was the custom of these people to shave the fore part of their head, that their enemies might not be able to seize them by the hair; the hinder part they left long, as a valiant race who would never turn their back. *Trollope's Iliad*, vol. i. p. 114. The words of Herodotus in the passage already referred to are, "they wear their hair clipped round about, shaving it all round the temples." The Septuagint renders the phrase, "that shaves his face round about." Niebuhr says that some Arab tribes still shave the temples and over the ears. *Descrip. de l'Arab.*, p. 59.

[1] Circumcision was practised by the priests, at least, in Egypt, from very early times. But the people were not circumcised. The Ishmaelites let the rite fall into disuse, and were forced to it at a later time, by the Jews. We know nothing of the Moabites or Ammonites being circumcised. The idea seems to be: The heathen will be punished as heathen, that is, as failing to recognize even so much of God as natural religion teaches. The Jews, though circumcised outwardly, will be punished because they are not circumcised in heart—that is, because their religion is only external and formal.

[2] **Jer. x. 1 5.** Judah is called "Israel," now that the Ten Tribes are gone.

[3] The whole system of astrology and divination by indications and phenomena in the heavens, is alluded to—such as unusual appearances of the sun, moon, or stars, the appearance of comets, and the position of stars, the look of the clouds, etc. See Lenormant's *Divination*, pp. 65, 66. See *Guy Mannering*, chaps. iii. and iv.

[4] See vol. iv. p. 369. Literally, "For it is wood one cuts from the *yaar*."

garden of cucumbers.' Idols do not speak: they must be carried, for they cannot walk. Be not afraid of them, for they can do you no hurt, neither is it in them to do you any good![2]

"6. There is no one at all like Thee, O Jehovah;[3] great art Thou, and Thy name is great in might! 7. Who shall not fear Thee, Thou King of the nations, for such fear is but Thy due.[4] For among all the wise of the nations, in all their kingdoms, there is no one at all like Thee! 8. But all (the wise) together are brutish, like cattle, and but fools. The religion of idols is folly;[5] it is but wood, like themselves! 9. Silver plates (to lay on the wooden shapes) are brought from Tarshish (in Spain, by the Tyrians), and gold from Uphaz,[6] which the artist prepares, and the hands of the goldsmith. Their robes are of blue and red-purple: they are all, only the work of skilled artists. 10. But Jehovah is God in truth; He is the Living God and the Eternal King: before His wrath the earth trembles, and the nations cannot abide His indignation.

[1] In the Epistle of Jeremy, v. 70, the phrase in the Hebrew text is evidently alluded to, and the rendering given as above. The Hebrew words are only two in number. Tomer, a palm tree, or the trunk of one, or, a post—and Mikshah, which means either "turned work," or, as a distinct word (Isa. i. 8), a garden of cucumbers. Mövers, and Graf, and Naegelsbach, render it as in the text. Keil, Ewald, Eichhorn, Streane, Sachs, Noyes, and Hitzig translate it, "like a pillar of turned wood." Hitzig, however, is rather in favour of the other rendering. **Jer. x. 6-8.**

[2] This passage closely resembles expressions of Isaiah in chaps. xlvi. 7; xlv. 20; xli. 23; xliv. 10. That the writer of these chapters could have borrowed from Jeremiah is impossible, from the differences of style. Jeremiah must, therefore, have been the borrower, and in that case these chapters must have been written before his day; and the whole theory of their later origin is refuted. The idea of the passage having been inserted in Jeremiah by a late author is also contradicted by its appearing in the Septuagint. That version is indeed even fuller than the Hebrew. It runs thus: "It is a tree cut out of the forest: the work of the carpenters, or a molten image. They are beautified with silver and gold; they fix them with hammers and nails: they will set them up that they may not move. It is wrought silver, they will not walk; forged silver. From Tarshish is brought gold of Mophaz, and the work of goldsmiths. They are all the work of craftsmen; they will be clothed with blue and purple. They must be carried, for they cannot ride. Fear them not, for they cannot do any evil, and there is no good in them." Jer. x. 3-5. Verse 9 of the Hebrew is thus transposed in the Greek.

[3] **Jer. x. 6-10.**

[4] "For Thine is all power." Eichhorn. Well.

[5] The folly and shamefulness of idolatry is often urged in Scripture. Ps. lxxiii. 20. Jer. xxii. 28. Hos. ix. 10. Jer. xi. 13. 1 Sam. xii. 21. See Wilton's *Negeb*, p. 182.

[6] Kneucker thinks Uphaz was an Indian colony in Yemen, South Arabia. *Bibel Lex.*, vol. v. p. 581. Gesenius fancies it is the same as Ophir. The *Speaker's Comm.* supposes it was on or near the river Hyphasis (now the Gharra); the south-east boundary of the Punjaub. Mühlau and Volck say that the locality is unknown.

"11. Thus shall ye say to them,[1] May the gods who have not made heaven and earth vanish from the earth, and from under these heavens! 12. Jehovah made the earth by His power; He has established the habitable world by His wisdom, and by His omniscience He has spread out the heavens. 13. At His thunder-voice, the waters in the heavens are in tumult; He causes the clouds to ascend from the end of the earth; He makes the lightnings which lead on the rain,[2] and brings forth the wind from its store chambers.[3] 14. Every man (whatever his wisdom) stands confounded before this spectacle: every goldsmith is ashamed of the graven image he has made, for his molten image is a lie; it has no breath in it. 15. The idols are vain; the work of folly; in the time of their visitation they perish. 16. But Jehovah, the Portion of Jacob,[4] is not like these; He is the Former of all things and He has chosen Israel as the tribe of His inheritance; His own peculiar people! Jehovah of Hosts is His name."

Now, once more, however, the vision of judgment, even on this favoured race, looms before the eyes of the prophet.

"17. Gather together and carry away out of the land thy goods (packed up for flight),[5] O thou that sittest on the ground in distress.[6] 18. For thus says Jehovah, Behold, I will, this time, cast forth the inhabitants of the land like a stone from a sling, and will hem them in so that their enemy will find them. 19. 'Woe is me! I am sore hurt!' (will you cry, in that day.) 'My wound[7] is incurable! This, this is my trouble,' said I, the daughter of Judah, 'and I must bear it. 20. My tent is spoiled; its cords that held it up are broken; my chil-

[1] **Jer. x. 10-16.** Verse 11 is written in Chaldee. Bleek, Hitzig and Keil accept it as genuine. It was perhaps written in the dialect of the common people as a proverbial saying, or as the very words they would use, in exile, respecting the gods of Babylon.

[2] Zech. x. 1. For "bright clouds" read "lightning." Ps. xxix. 10.

[3] 1 Kings xviii. 45. Job xxxviii. 22.

[4] Modern criticism quotes this title of Jehovah (*Bible in Jewish Church*, p. 272) to shew that He was regarded by the Hebrews as only their tribal God, as Chemosh was that of the Moabites. Yet the very next words proclaim Him the Creator of all things, which no tribal god pretended to be. No idol, moreover, is more than a piece of wood—a lie; but Jehovah reigns over heaven and earth. Is this a description of a "tribal God"?

[5] Literally, "thy package;" the folded-up bundle of what had been saved, to carry with them to their captivity.

[6] **Jer. x. 17 23.**

[7] Literally, "for my breach" = breaking up. It is rendered "destruction," chap. iv. 6.

dren go forth from me, and are not; there is no one left to set up my tent again, or stretch out its coverings."

The cause of such a fate is now repeated by the prophet.

"21. (All this has happened) because the leaders of the people, its shepherds, have grown dull of heart, and have not sought Jehovah. Therefore they have not acted wisely, and all their flock is scattered. 22. Hark! a rumour! behold, it spreads! Hark! a great sound (of an army [1] advancing) from the north country, to make the cities of Judah desolate—a dwelling of jackals!"

In that day Judah will cry:

"23. I know, O Jehovah, that the way of man is not in his own [2] hands; it is not for man, as he walks, to direct his steps. 24. O Jehovah! chasten me, but only in measure; [3] not in Thine anger, lest Thou bring me to nothing. 25. Pour out Thy fury on the nations that know Thee not; that call not upon Thy name! For they have devoured Jacob; they have devoured and consumed him, and have made his dwelling desolate." [4]

[1] Isa. ix. 5.

[2] The same word occurs in Ps. xxxvii. 23. "The steps of a good man *are ordered* by the Lord."

[3] In chap. xlvi. 28, the same word as is used here is translated, "I will correct thee *in measure*." So Eichhorn renders it.

[4] This verse occurs almost exactly in Ps. lxxix. 6, 7, which was probably written after the Captivity. The words would apply equally well to the days of Nebuchadnezzar, or to those of Antiochus Epiphanes. Dean Perowne, *Introd. to the Psalms*. Delitzsch, *Die Psalmen*. These final clauses must therefore have been quoted by the writer of the psalm. That they are a later addition to the prophet is scarcely conceivable when we remember the superstitious care taken of the Sacred Text by the later Jews.

CHAPTER X.

THE FINDING OF THE BOOK OF THE LAW.

While Jeremiah was striving, by every form of earnest persuasion, to bring about such a moral reformation as, alone, would make the official changes in religion, effected by Josiah, of any real worth, an event occurred in the year B.C. 624, which permanently affected the spiritual history of Israel.

Eighteen years had passed since the king's accession, though he was still only a young man of twenty-six. The whole country had been cleared of its high places and other heathen or superstitious disfigurements, and the temple was rapidly being repaired and restored to its ancient uses, under a commission, consisting of Hilkiah, the high priest; Shaphan, the king's secretary[1] or minister of finance;[2] Maaseiah, the Sar,[3] or governor of Jerusalem; and Joah, the king's Mazkir, or keeper of the State archives.[4] While engaged in their duties, Hilkiah came upon a manuscript roll, which proved to be a copy of "the Book of the Torah, or Law, of Jehovah, by the hand of Moses."[5] In what part of the temple it was found is not stated, but the discovery

[1] Keil. [2] Ewald, *Gesch.*, vol. iii. p. 697.

[3] Sar is translated elsewhere in the A.V. "prince," "chief captain," "chief ruler," "captain."

[4] Keil, *Einleitung*, p. 700. The word means, literally, "the remembrancer," and the office entailed the duty of bringing before the king the public business to be done, and to counsel him respecting it. Thenius, on 1 Kings iv. 3.

[5] (Hebrew) 2 Chron. xxxiv. 14. In 2 Kings (xxii. 8) it is called "the Book of the Torah, or Law."

took place when the commissioners were removing the money gathered to repair the temple,[1] from the chests in which it had been stored; which may mark either when the Book was found, or the place where it was discovered. In the days of Christ, it was believed that the king had sent Hilkiah to get what money remained, after the restoration of the temple, to melt into cups, dishes, etc., for the sacred ministrations, and that while he was bringing it out he lighted upon "the Holy Books of Moses."[2] The Rabbinical tradition is, that "the Book" was found beneath a heap of stones, under which it had been hidden when Ahaz burned the other copies of the Law. It may be, however, that it had lain hid in the Ark itself, which Manasseh had thrown aside into some of the many cells, or chambers, round the temple, where it might easily have remained, unnoticed, till the searching eagerness of the commission discovered it.[3]

Hitherto the king had acted only from the traditional knowledge of the old religion, preserved by the godly through the dark times of Manasseh and Amon; but the written Law was now in his hands. That its earlier existence was well known, is shewn by its instant recognition as "The Book of the Law." Nor is it possible that Josiah himself, and those round him, should have received it as the ancient sacred book of the nation, had no such book formerly existed.

Not a moment was lost in communicating the great event to the king. Handing the manuscript to Shaphan, the royal scribe or secretary, as the proper person to bring it before

[1] The money was taken from the chest, and duly weighed, then put into bags, which were forthwith sealed. 2 Kings xii. 10; xxiv. 4. Septuagint.

[2] Jos., *Ant.*, X. iv. 2.

[3] This is the idea of Thenius (*Comm.* on 2 Kings, p. 435). The opinion of so calm and impartial a scholar must, in any case, command respect.

Josiah, Hilkiah awaited the result. Skilled in reading such manuscripts, as became his office, the secretary, after examining it himself, at once sought an opportunity to read "out of it"[1] to his master. The effect on the king was like that produced on Luther by his finding an old Latin Bible in the library of the Augustine convent at Erfurt. The Reformer had never seen the Scriptures, though he was not only a Christian, but a monk.[2] There had been religion enough, of a kind, round him all his life; religion professing to be based on the written word; but the difference between the conventional and the true flashed on his soul with lightning brightness, when the Sacred Book itself was consulted. It taught him another lesson than that of fasts and vigils, and led him to trust to the infinite grace of God rather than to singing masses. Intensely in earnest, like the German monk, Josiah was overwhelmed on hearing, for the first time, the very words of the Divine Law. Much had been handed down by the godly through the dark times of his father and grandfather, but much had been neglected. Rending his clothes, in token of profound grief, at the thought that all the calamities of his people had come on them because their "fathers had not kept the word of Jehovah, to do after all that was written in this book," he sent to the prophetess Huldah, the recognized head of the order of prophets in Jerusalem—for Jeremiah still lived at Anathoth, though often in the city—to inquire respecting this great discovery. Would the nation really have to suffer all the curses pronounced on apostasy from Jehovah, in the newly-found Book, or was there still hope? The answer was in keeping with the words of the prophets as a whole. Judah

[1] So in the Hebrew. 2 Chron. xxxiv. 18. In 2 Kings xxii. 8, 10, it is said "he read it."

[2] Carlyle's *Hero Worship*, p. 120.

had fallen by its determined idolatry, and the Divine wrath would certainly be poured out on it. But Josiah had listened to the preaching of Jeremiah and his brethren, and had humbled himself before God, and rent his clothes and wept. He therefore would be gathered to his fathers before the final catastrophe of his people. So far as that was concerned, he should die in peace.[1]

The teaching of the prophets, the example of earlier kings, and the words of the Law itself, indicated the next step to be taken. The prophets, in all their utterances, had addressed their fellow-countrymen as standing in special relations to Jehovah, as His chosen people ; the vineyard He had planted ; the bride He had espoused. David, Solomon, Jehoshaphat, and Hezekiah, as the heads of the State, had publicly conducted solemn acts of national consecration to Him. The words of the newly-discovered Law, moreover, carried back the history of the race to the covenant of Jehovah with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and to that made under the shadow of Sinai, with the tribes sprung from these patriarchs. It was hence natural that Josiah should seek formally to renew for himself and his people, so august a relation with the God of their fathers. Summoning the elders of Judah and Jerusalem, therefore, as representatives of the whole community, and all the population, as spectators of the solemn act done in their name, he held a great assembly at the temple in Jerusalem, to bring the newly-found Law before them. On the day appointed, the wide space of the temple enclosure was crowded with a vast multitude, headed by the prophets, priests, Levites, and great men of the tribes. A platform had been raised for the young king, in the court of the temple ; the elders of the

[1] 2 Kings xxii. 8-20. 2 Chron. xxxiv. 14-28.

people standing around. Opening the precious roll, he himself, to deepen the impression, read it aloud to them throughout, with all its details of the ancient covenant made with the nation by Jehovah; the promises if it were kept, and the curses if it were broken. Then followed a striking scene. Lifting his voice, Josiah solemnly declared his resolution to live in obedience to all the requirements of the Divine word. "Standing on his platform," says the Book of Kings,[1] "he made *the* covenant before Jehovah, to walk after Jehovah, and to keep His commandments, and His testimonies, and His statutes, with all his heart; and with all his soul to perform the words of the covenant which are written in this book."[2] Kindled to enthusiasm by his example, the elders, in the name of the people, hastened to give their eager concurrence in the act of the king;[3] the whole body of the people, apparently, adopting their act, by a loud Amen. Judah was once more, at least in outward form, the covenant people of God.[4]

What portion of the Bible was thus brought to light after long oblivion, has been the subject of warm controversy. Many scholars believe it was the book known as Deuteronomy;[5] others, that while including that section of the Torah, it also embraced a greater or less portion of the other divisions of the Pentateuch;[6] while Thenius supposes it to have been a great collection of Mosaic commands and laws, from which our Pentateuch was afterwards arranged and

[1] 2 Kings xxiii. 3. 2 Chron. xxxiv. 31. [2] See Deut. xxvi. 16.

[3] Graetz thinks that an ox was slain, and that the king and all the people passed between the parts of it. *Gesch.*, vol. ii. p. 318.

[4] 2 Kings xxiii. 1–3. 2 Chron. xxxiv. 29–32. Deut. xxvii. 15. 1 Chron. xvi. 36.

[5] So Gesenius, De Wette, Graetz, Reuss, Schrader, Bleek, Bertheau, Ewald, Dillmann, and others.

[6] Hengstenberg, Kennicott, Keil, Dean Perowne, Schultz, Lord Arthur Hervey, von Lengerke.

compiled.[1] As, however, it is certain that a Book of the Law, containing more or less of the present Pentateuch, was in circulation long before Josiah,[2] it seems most reasonable to believe that Hilkiah recovered not only Deuteronomy, but the various sacred writings even then comprised in the Torah, or Law, as a whole. That portion read by Shaphan and Josiah may, indeed, have been only our present Deuteronomy, before its final revision; nor is it strange that it should be spoken of as in itself the Book of the Law, since it presents, with a glowing warmth and poetry which are specially attractive and impressive, the last utterances of the Founder of the Israelite nation, summing up and enforcing his whole previous legislation. Deuteronomy, moreover, was "the Book of the Law" required to be written out by each king on his accession,[3] and only this portion, as embodying the spirit of the whole, was read before the people, every seven years,[4] at the Feast of Tabernacles.[5] The "Book of the Law" was therefore, clearly, a general expression, sometimes embracing all the sections of the Torah, but, at others, confined to Deuteronomy—the last. Nor is it to be overlooked that Deuteronomy alone presents "the Law" in a form brief enough to be read through in public, at one time, or that the words in which Josiah and the people renewed their covenant with Jehovah — pledging themselves to keep His commandments, His testimonies and statutes, with all their heart and with all their soul, are

[1] Thenius, *B. d. Könige*, p. 434. [2] Ewald, *Geschichte*, vol. iii. p. 759.

[3] Deut. xvii. 18. The words mean, literally, "a *repetition* of this law," which is only another name for Deuteronomy. Hence the Septuagint renders the words "of this Deuteronomy."

[4] It was received as an unquestionable tradition in the time of the second temple that this had always been the practice. The words are, "from the beginning of Deuteronomy." Dean Perowne, *Dict. of Bible*, vol. ii. p. 773. Delitzsch, *On Genesis*, p. 68.

[5] Deut. xxxi. 9–12.

peculiar to that book.[1] But this in no way precludes the existence, along with it, of the other portions of the Law. Even the most advanced critics admit that parts at least of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers, already existed, and these could hardly have been left to perish by the faithful hands which had preserved the copy of Deuteronomy.

The age of the book thus found has given rise to vigorous controversy. Was it a portion of the Law handed down from the time of Moses, or, if not, what was its age? At the end of Deuteronomy it is expressly said[2] that Moses wrote "the words of this law in a book until they were finished," and its existence in a written form is again and again mentioned in other passages.[3] The future king, as we have seen, was to transcribe it. Joshua is commanded to write "all the words of it" on great stones smoothed with plaster, as was the custom in Egypt, and to set them up on Mount Ebal, after he had crossed the Jordan.[4] Finally, the complete copy is said to have been handed over to the priests by Moses, after he had himself written it out; to be put "in the side of the Ark of the Covenant," for permanent preservation.

Nothing, it might seem, could be clearer than this. Yet the most extraordinary theories have been advanced in support of the view that Deuteronomy was a production of the reign of Hezekiah, or even a conscious fraud of well-meaning persons in the time of Josiah himself. Von Bohlen maintains that it was composed by the high priest Hilkiah, the prophet Jeremiah, the prophetess Huldah, the scribe

[1] Deut. iv. 29; vi. 5; x. 12; xi. 13; xiii. 3; xxvi. 19; xxx. 2. [2] Deut. xxxi. 24.
[3] Deut. xvii. 18, ff.; xxvii. 2, 3, 8; xxviii. 58, 61; xxix. 19, ff.; xxx. 10; xxxi. 9.
[4] A summary of the Law must have been intended in this case, or perhaps simply its bare enactments, in brief, without the interspersed comments. In our own day, the essence of an Act of Parliament is constantly published in a condensed form.

Shaphan, and his son Ahikam.[1] Ewald fancied it was written in Egypt by a prophet who had fled thither, during the persecution of Manasseh ; for the benefit, primarily, of Jews sold by that king as slaves to Pharaoh. Thence, it was accidentally brought to Palestine, and at last found its way to the place in which Hilkiah discovered it.[2] Gesenius ascribed it to Jeremiah.[3] The De Wette-Schrader "Introduction" assumes that it was written by some one closely connected with that prophet.[4] Robertson Smith, following Wellhausen, Dillmann,[5] Riehm, and others, sets it down as the creation of prophets, not priests, in the seventh century[6] before Christ. Riehm, like Ewald, ascribes it to the reign of Manasseh. Knobel and von Lengerke, like Graf, and some others, think it was written under Josiah. Vaihinger takes for granted it was composed under Hezekiah.[7]

That so many should have assumed its late origin seems to result from the fact that new theories rise, prevail, and pass away, in Biblical criticism, as in all other branches of study. Sir Charles Lyell still is a supreme authority in geological science, but, since his death, his great doctrine of the uniform action of existing natural causes, and no other, in all ages of the past, is regarded by not a few, as too sweeping in its demands. Not long since invalids were sent by the faculty to the warmth of Madeira ; now, the same class of patients are recommended to seek the arctic cold of an alpine winter. In both cases, science gave apparently ample grounds for its counsels. The fact is, a theory started by some vigorous thinker, and supported by him with an

[1] Von Bohlen, *Die Genesis historisch-kritisch erläutert*, p. 164.
[2] Ewald, *Geschichte*, vol. iii. p. 735.
[3] *Gesch. d. Hebr. Spr.*, p. 32.
[4] De Wette-Schrader, *Einleitung*, p. 323.
[5] *Bibel Lex.*, vol. ii. p. 444.
[6] *Bible in Jewish Church*, p. 362.
[7] Herzog, *Real Encyk.*, vol. ii. pp. 329, ff. *Studien und Kritiken*, 1873, pp. 165, ff.

imposing array of sound or unsound evidence, is certain to gain the support of the mass of average minds, till some original brain starts another, and then the first is quietly dropped. It has been thus, repeatedly, in Biblical criticism, and it is so at present.

The new school, however, is far from embracing the whole scholarship of the day. Lord Arthur Hervey holds that Deuteronomy was read by Joshua at Mount Gerizim. Kleinert thinks it was composed in the time of the Judges. Keil believes it was written, at least to the thirty-first chapter, by Moses,[1] and Delitzsch agrees with him.[2] Dean Perowne has no doubt of this.[3] Most of these critics, indeed, admit evidence of revision and final completion; they speak only of the substance of the book.

COVERING OF A ROLL OF THE LAW.

The roll is wound round the two rods, which appear below. The covering is put over it for its preservation.

It is certain, as already said, that sacred books were in existence among the Hebrews long before Josiah. In Exodus we read[4] of "the Book of the Covenant," which contained the "words and the judgments" of God, so far as they had till then been given. The defeat of Amalek was written in "*the* Book,"[5] apparently one already known; and in Numbers we learn that Moses wrote the journeyings of the children of Israel, and

[1] *Einleitung*, pp. 93, ff. [2] Luthardt's *Zeitschrift*, 1880, pp. 503-509.
[3] *Dict. of Bible*, art. "Pentateuch and Deut."
[4] Exod. xxiv. 7. [5] Exod. xvii. 14.

their various stations.[1] The language of Deuteronomy has already been quoted. Joshua repeatedly mentions "the Book of the Law of God," and names Moses as having written it.[2] David speaks of a written law of Moses.[3] At the coronation of King Joash, the testimony was put in his hands, or laid on his head, as required by Deuteronomy.[4] In Chronicles[5] David is said to have directed his preparations for public worship "according to the law of Jehovah;" and in his charge to Solomon he speaks of the "law of Jehovah thy God, the statutes, and the judgments which Jehovah charged Moses with, concerning Israel."[6] Rehoboam is said to have "forsaken the law of Jehovah."[7] Asa commanded Judah to obey the "Law and the Commandment."[8] Azariah the prophet reminds that king, that Israel had long been "without the true God, and without a *teaching priest* and without *law*."[9] Jehoshaphat appointed princes, priests, and Levites to instruct the people, and, it is added, "they *taught* in Judah and had the Book of the Law of Jehovah with them."[10] Amaziah, we are told, spared the children of his father's murderers in obedience to the directions of "the law of the book of Moses."[11] Hezekiah's regulations in connection with the restoration of the national worship, are said to have been carried out "as it is written in the law of Jehovah;"[12] and Jehovah is introduced by the author of Chronicles as speaking to David of "the whole Law, and the statutes and the ordinances by the hand of Moses."[13]

But not only are written documents thus constantly

[1] Num. xxxiii. 2.
[2] Josh. i. 7, 8; viii. 31, 34; xxiii. 6; xxiv. 26.
[3] 1 Kings ii. 3.
[4] 2 Kings xi. 12. 2 Chron. xxiii. 11.
[5] 1 Chron. xvi. 40.
[6] 1 Chron. xvii. 12, 13.
[7] 2 Chron. xii.
[8] 2 Chron. xiv. 4.
[9] 2 Chron. xvii. 9.
[10] 2 Chron. xv. 3.
[11] 2 Chron. xxv. 4. 2 Kings xiv. 6. Deut. xxiv. 16.
[12] 2 Chron. xxxi. 3, 4, 21.
[13] 2 Chron. xxxiii. 8.

mentioned; quotations or references to the books of the Pentateuch are numerous through the prophets. Amos shews his intimate acquaintance with Deuteronomy.[1] Hosea not only proves in many passages that he knew it well,[2] but speaks of the whole law[3] in these remarkable words: "I (Jehovah) have written to him (Israel) the ten thousand things of my Law." A few of the many allusions to Deuteronomy in Isaiah are given in the fourth volume of this book,[4] and a reference Bible will shew the same feature in Micah. Thus, not only Jeremiah and the later prophets, but the whole brotherhood, from its earliest member, silently witness, not merely to the existence of Deuteronomy as a recognized part of the Law, but to that of the fuller revelations of the Pentateuch.

Among the various tests of the antiquity of any document, no one is more reliable than the peculiarities of the words it employs. It would, for example, be impossible that any writing in which the pronoun "its" occurred could be older than about A.D. 1600, because "its" was not in use before that date. It does not once occur in our Authorized Version.[5] The use of old English forms, such as "maken," and "slepen," for "to make," and "to sleep,"[6] marks a composition as of a certain date in the history of our language. But Deuteronomy is characterized, to a striking degree, by

[1] See Amos i. 11, 14; ii. 10, 11; iii. 2; iv. 4, 5, 9, 10; v. 11, 25; vii. 3; viii. 14; ix. 4, 7; in reference Bibles. See also iv. 11. Comp. with Deut. xxix. 23.

[2] Hos. viii. 12.

[3] See in a reference Bible, Hos. i. 2; iii. 3; iv. 4; v. 10; vi. 4; vii. 12; viii. 12; ix. 4, 12; x. 4, 8, 10; xi. 3, 8; xiii. 5, 10, 12; xiv. 3. Compare also Hos. iv. 13, with Deut. xii. 2; Hos. viii. 13, with Deut. xxviii. 68; Hos. xi. 3, with Deut. i. 31; Hos. xiii. 6, with Deut. viii. 11–14.

[4] Vol. iv. pp. 304-5.

[5] Trench's *English Past and Present*, p. 89. Marsh's *English Language*, p. 122.

[6] Thus—

> "And smalĕ fowlĕs maken melodie,
> That slepen al the night with open yhe."—*Chaucer.*

verbal forms which had grown obsolete long before the time of Josiah. The masculine form of the pronoun, *hōō*, for the feminine, *hēē*, occurs, in all, 195 times in the Pentateuch, and of these, 36 instances are in Deuteronomy—a usage like that of old English as seen in our Bibles.[1] Indeed, the feminine, *hēē*, is not found at all in Deuteronomy, though it is met with 11 times in the other books of the Pentateuch. "*Naar*," a youth, is of common gender in the Pentateuch, standing for a maiden as well as a boy; and, in accordance with this primitive usage, the feminine, "*Naarah*," occurs only once in Deuteronomy. The names given to the months of the year, being different in different periods, serve also to shew, to a certain extent, the age of the books in which they occur. Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, and Zechariah are later books, belonging to the period of the Persian rule; and it is natural to find them using the Aramaic calendar. But if we found this calendar used in the Pentateuch, it would be an argument in favour of its late date. On the contrary, we find, in both Exodus and Deuteronomy, not only the old name Abib, but in Kings, the old names used with an explanation, as if already archaic terms, requiring elucidation; the Book of Kings being later than the Pentateuch. König, in his unanswerable analysis of the book,[2] gives long lists of instances in which ancient forms of words are used, and shews that others are frequent in it which were obsolete at a later period.[3] One striking fact is specially curious. The termination *ūn*, in the future, is unknown in the prose writings of the period after the return from Babylon. It never

[1] Thus Exod. xxxvii. 17. "Of beaten work made he the candlestick; *his* shaft, and *his* branch, *his* bowls, *his* knops, and *his* flowers, were of the same."

[2] König's *Alt. Test. Studien*, Heft ii. Berlin, 1839.

[3] Some of these will be found in Dean Perowne's article on the Pentateuch, *Dict. of the Bible*, vol. ii. p. 782.

occurs in Esther, Ezra, or Nehemiah, the 1st Book of Chronicles, the Hebrew of Daniel, Haggai, Ecclesiastes, Lamentations, Canticles, Jonah, or Obadiah. It is met with only 5 times in Jeremiah, and 3 times in Ezekiel. But in the Pentateuch it is found 105 times, and of these 58 are in Deuteronomy.[1] The curious fact that in some instances Aramaic forms, which are habitual in the oldest books of Scripture, occur also in the latest, is susceptible of a natural and easy explanation. Abraham, at his arrival in Canaan, spoke Aramaic, and, though he adopted the closely allied language of the Canaanites, some of the forms of his own mother-tongue were still retained; as forms of old English still survive in our local dialects.[2] Gradually, however, these traces of their Mesopotamian origin died out from the language of the Hebrews. But the captivity carried them back again to Aramaic-speaking lands, and there they learned, once more, to use the tongue laid aside by their forefathers, more than 1,500 years before.[3] Intercourse with Damascus, Assyria, and Babylon, from the time of David to the fall of the State, must also have tended to reintroduce Aramaic peculiarities.[4]

Nor can objection be raised to the remote antiquity of any portion of the Pentateuch from its voluminousness as a whole. The long annals of Egyptian and Assyrian kings, and the abundant literary remains of various kinds, recovered from the mounds of the Tigris and Euphrates, and from the tombs of Egypt, prove that written documents were common in remote ages. In the Louvre Museum

[1] König, pp. 165-6.

[2] Lancashire, "singen" for sing. So, generally, in Provincial English, "afeard" for "afraid," "ris" for "rose," "axe" for "ask;" all, simply old English forms.

[3] König, Heft ii. *passim*.

[4] On the whole subject of Deuteronomy, the introduction to Schultz, *Das Deuteronomium erklärt*, Berlin, 1859, is very copious.

there is, indeed, an exquisite statue of an Egyptian scribe busy with his pen, dating from a period long anterior to Abraham. The cuneiform, or wedge-shaped, documents discovered at Tel Amarna shew, further, that the Babylonian alphabet and characters were in use, long before Joshua, over all Western Asia, including Phœnicia and Palestine. Nor can these tablets be the only ones of their kind. They bear witness to the existence of similar libraries in other parts of the old civilized world. There must have been schools in Palestine where the scribes of Canaan learnt the language and script of Babylonia, as well as libraries in which the imperishable books of burnt clay were stored up. Such a library, as has already been pointed out,[1] must have existed at Kirjath-Sepher, and for aught we know may still be lying beneath the ground. And hence, there is no difficulty in believing that rolls so voluminous as those of the Pentateuch could have been written and freely copied in the days of the wilderness life, or in any subsequent age.

Other grounds on which a late date is assigned to Deuteronomy and the various books of the Pentateuch can hardly be regarded as very weighty.

Thus it is made a difficulty, for example, that in the last chapter of Deuteronomy,[2] which no one supposes of the same age as the earlier part of the book, the town of Dan is thus named, though it was known as Laish till the days of the Judges.[3] That such additions have been made here and there to the historical notices of the earlier books, by revisers of different periods, is assumed to prove that the historical portions of the first books of the Bible were written in the land of Canaan, and that, not before the

[1] See vol. i. p. 300. [2] Deut. xxxiv. 1. [3] Judg. xviii. 27, 29.

period of the kings![1] The words, "on this side Jordan," in Deut. i. 1, it is said, ought to be translated "across the Jordan," in which case they would shew that the writer lived in West Palestine. Etymologically, "*aiber*," the word used, means "*across*," but unfortunately for the new critics, it was employed arbitrarily, for both east and west, when Deuteronomy was written, without reference to the relative position of the Jordan, or other natural boundary; leaving its meaning to be gathered from an additional word of explanation. Thus, in Num. xxxii. 19, we read, "For we will not inherit with them on yonder side (mai-aibĕr) the Jordan, and forward," or "thence, on;" "because our inheritance is fallen to us on this side (mai-aibĕr) Jordan, eastward;" so that in this verse *aiber* stands for both east and west of the Jordan. The word, ultimately, after the conquest of Canaan, was applied to the east side of Jordan; as Perea, which means the same, was at a still later period; but, when the Pentateuch was written, it was used indifferently of the east and west, in reference to the temporary position of the Hebrews, who were still on the eastern side. Its meaning in the first verse of Deuteronomy is, moreover, at once conclusively proved from the fact that the various places mentioned as marking the region intended, are all on the east of the Jordan.

We are further told that the Pentateuch could not be as old as Moses, from the use of the word *yamah*—"towards the sea"—for westward; and of "Negeb," the name employed for the southern uplands of Judah, for the south. "At Mount Sinai, it is said, the sea did not lie to the west, and the Negeb was to the north." "If the writer lived

[1] Smith, p. 322. The instance quoted is the list of Edomite kings "before there reigned a king of the children of Israel"—an expression which must have been added by a reviser of Saul's or David's time, at the earliest.

in Palestine, however, the expressions would be correct."[1] But it is forgotten that the Hebrews had spoken the language of Palestine for centuries before the birth of Moses, and must have adopted and used its ordinary geographical expressions, in the popular and not the etymological sense. Our word "south" means "towards the sun," but surely an Australian is not wrong in calling Melbourne south of Sydney, though, to him, it is not really south, that is, towards the sun, but north. Does he say that he goes *south* to India, because that country is etymologically south from Australia?

An objection is also raised on the ground that the patriarchal sites mentioned in the Pentateuch can still be identified, while we cannot put our finger so readily on those mentioned in connection with the wilderness wanderings. As if it could be as easy to follow the halting places over a pathless wilderness, as the sojourn of an encampment near the still existing towns and villages of a settled country!

A great deal has been made of the use of the two names, Elohim and Jehovah, for God, in various passages and parts of the early books of Scripture. But while it is readily admitted that writings still older than those of Moses may have been incorporated into the original narratives, or added, in some cases, in after times, the extent to which the theory of "independent sources" is pressed, in connection with the use of these two sacred words, is arbitrary and fanciful in the extreme. Ewald, in the face of his own passion for subdividing, has shewn that the employment of different names of God is to be explained from their different significations; and the other grounds advanced for dissecting each book—the superscriptions, repetitions, and variations in

[1] Smith, p. 323.

accounts of the same event, as well as their abrupt introduction—are, according to him, peculiarities of Semitic historical composition, but no proof of variety of sources or compilers, in the separate sections of a narrative.[1] Since his day, however, critics have gone to greater lengths. Among them the Pentateuch is torn into countless shreds : even single verses in many cases being cut in two, as the composition of different authors. The theory of various documents has, indeed, taken every shape, as the cloud of Polonius seemed by turns a weasel, a camel, and a whale. Two documents, or authors, by no means suffice. Every critic has his own fancy, and assigns the sacred text to what number of authors, editors, and compositions he thinks fit, each with an arbitrary name and age. Dillmann supposes a first Book of Laws, a second, and then a third, followed by the Deuteronomist.[2] Ewald recognizes nine documents by nine different authors. Hupfeld sees the work of four authors in Genesis alone. Bleek acknowledges only a "Jehovist," who filled out an original "Elohist" document, embracing the whole Pentateuch except Deuteronomy ; which itself is a production of the interval between Hezekiah and Josiah. Knobel detects six documents, by six compilers, in the Five Books. These critics, and many others, range, fancy free, over centuries, in their estimate of the age of their material, and cut it, each, to his own pattern. But a new school has risen. The theory of Graf, that Deuteronomy was older than Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers, had the charm of novelty, and has gained various disciples. In fact, it is the fashionable hypothesis of the day, and we now hear of Levitical, that is, priestly laws, and of the Deuteronomic

[1] *Die Composition d. Genesis kritisch untersucht.* Braunschweig, 1823.
[2] *Bib. Lex.*, vol. ii. p. 444.

code, breathing the spirit of the Prophets more than of Jehovist or Elohist documents. But the new hypothesis of "Levitical and non-Levitical, or Deuteronomic portions" has only introduced fresh complications in the dissection of the different books of the Pentateuch, with the same delightful independence on the part of each critic, in cutting the sacred text to shreds.

One illustration may suffice. A recent "Introduction,"[1] of high standing, recognizes three authors only in the Pentateuch :—an annalist ; a writer who favoured theocratic or priestly views ; and a third, pervaded by the spirit of the Prophets, though he has made free use of the ancient documents. Among these compilers the Book of Genesis is distributed, a passage here, and another there, in a table extending over a large page and a half, in three parallel columns, single verses being cut in two in fifteen cases, as written by different hands. The mutilated fragments of Exodus cover a similar page ; nine verses being bisected. Leviticus is assigned almost as a whole to the "Elohim" documents. Numbers has three-quarters of a page devoted to a hypothetical table of the contributions of the three compilers, the two halves of six different verses being referred to two independent authors. In Deuteronomy "the Annalist" is credited with four and a half verses in one chapter,[2] and six in another, including two separate halves ;[3] the "Theocratic compiler" is detected as the author of two verses in one chapter and three in another ;[4] while the "Prophetic contributor" is assumed to have added one chapter and part of three others ; all the rest falling to the share of the "Deuteronomist." Confusion this, rather

[1] *De Wette-Schrader's*, pp. 274, 276, 280, 281, 289, 294.
[2] Deut. xxxii. [3] Deut. xxxiv. [4] Deut. iv. 10.

than simplification ; darkness rather than light ! No wonder Graetz, himself a wild theorist, ingenuously admits that no two critics agree either in the division of their material, or in the age they assign to the compositions they thus arbitrarily define.[1] Let the unsophisticated reader glance at the different books of the Pentateuch, and notice how closely the Divine names of "Lord" and "God," answering to Jehovah and Elohim, are associated, in countless instances ; often, indeed, in the same verse ; and he will be able to judge how hopeless it is to build any general theory of authorship on their use. Nor is the attempt less arbitrary to apportion the sacred text to distinct authors and ages, from a fancied detection of a different style in the various sections.

The claim expressly made in Deuteronomy of its being written by Moses,[2] is strengthened, if we may so speak, by the whole tone and contents of the book. The magnificent addresses of the Prophet and the laws he enforces, correspond, throughout, to the situation described in the opening verses, which represent Israel as encamped, at the end of their wilderness life, on the steppes of Moab, ready to cross the Jordan. He speaks not only with the vividness of an eye-witness, but with the enthusiasm and tenderness of a Leader, who could look back to the time when his people were in the "slave house" of Egypt. Allusions to Egyptian customs and usages, natural in the mouth of one familiar with that country, are constant. We have references to Egyptian regulations in time of war ;[3] to the Egyptian bastinado,[4] and to the Egyptian mode of irrigation.[5] Among the curses threatened are "the sicknesses of Egypt."[6] To

[1] *Geschichte*, vol. ii. Note, p. 455.
[2] Deut. xxxi. 24.
[3] Deut. xx. 5.
[4] Deut. xxv. 2.
[5] Deut. xi. 10.
[6] Deut. vii. 15 ; xxviii. 60.

be sold again to that country is the ideal of direst calamity.[1] As in Leviticus,[2] the remembrance that they were once slaves in Egypt is urged, repeatedly, to lead them to obey the laws,[3] and references to the abode of Israel there are frequent[4] even in the laws themselves, and, above all, in that respecting the king; a peculiarity very hard to explain if the book was written in the reign of Josiah or Manasseh.

Nor is it easy to imagine why a writer in the time of these kings, should have represented Moses as giving directions respecting their putting down nations which had then, for centuries, ceased to be objects of public concern. The Amalekites and Canaanites are to be rooted out; but the former had virtually been so since the time of David, four hundred years back, and the remnant of the Canaanites in the bounds of Judah had, for ages, been slaves. The prohibition of the worship of the host of heaven[5] has been hastily fancied to refer to the idolatry introduced by Ahaz and Manasseh from Assyria, but may as justly be held to forbid the ancient Arab idolatry of the same kind.[6] A pure spiritual religion such as Deuteronomy presents, allowing no similitude of Jehovah of any kind, checks every approach to idolatry, while the demand that worship and obedience should rest on the affections, guards against formalism. All the laws given anticipate the possession of Western Palestine, and are fitted for the altered state of things this would introduce. In no case is the passage across Jordan an accomplished event; it is always, at most, in the near future.

[1] Deut. xxviii. 68. [2] Lev. xix. 34; xvii.–xx.; and throughout very like Deut.
[3] Deut. v. 15; xxiv. 18, 22.
[4] Deut. vi. 21–23; vii. 8, 18; xi. 3; xvii. 16.
[5] Deut. iv. 19; xvii. 3.
[6] See De Wette-Schrader, § 206, *e.g.*, on the one side, and Kleinert, *Untersuchungen*, pp. 105, ff.; Keil, *Die B. der Könige*, p. 388; Delitzsch, *Zu Hiob*, p. 387, on the other.

That modifications of the statutes given at Sinai occur in some instances, is only what was inevitable, in view of the transition of the community from tent life, to that of a settled population. Even these variations, however, are based on the Sinaitic legislation. In the earlier books, Moses, as the great prophet, had spoken in the name of Jehovah; in Deuteronomy he reminds his nation, now that he is about to leave them, that he was the intermediary through whom these Divine communications had been given. Much stress has been laid on the emphasis with which Deuteronomy urges the recognition of a central sanctuary by the tribes. The use of high places by the patriarchs and prophets, to a late period, is thought to imply that this marks the date of the book as not earlier than Manasseh or Josiah. It is suggested, indeed, that the idea of a single temple was an invention of the priests at Jerusalem, to secure a monopoly of their office.[1] But the Tabernacle had already, from the first, embodied the same principle.[2] Deuteronomy only assumes that it will continue to be recognized in the future as in the past, naming no favoured spot; leaving that to the circumstances of after ages. Nor does it even preclude a change from one locality to another, as occasion may demand.[3] Hence, Shiloh was the first great religious centre; Jerusalem only rising to take its place under David and Solomon. Nor is it strange that in the dissolution of society after the death of Joshua, when national unity perished for centuries, local sanctuaries should have everywhere sprung up, in accordance with ancient custom; or that when the

[1] So Reuss and others.

[2] Wellhausen boldly meets this, by declaring that there never was a Tabernacle; that the account of it was only an invention of the priests after the Exile—that is, 1,000 years after Moses.

[3] Deut. xii. 14-26; xiv. 25, ff.; xvi. 2, 6, 11, etc.

tribes had been raised once more to a nation, under the kings, the prejudices of generations made it impossible, till the days of Josiah, to carry out, to its fullest extent, the law appointing only one central sanctuary. Even so late as the reign of Hezekiah, as we know, his attempt to centralize worship was urged on the populace by the Assyrian officials of Sennacherib, in the expectation that it would rouse them to revolt.[1]

The brief cautions,[2] that if kings were introduced, they should avoid relying on horses and chariots, and should neither indulge in polygamy nor strive to amass vast treas-

[1] See vol. iv. p. 457. Stress is laid by Vaihinger (Herzog, vol. ii. p. 325) on the use of the words "house of Jehovah," Deut. xxiii. 18, as proving the late origin of Deuteronomy. But it occurs in the original legislation, which all grant to be Mosaic Exod. xxiii. 19, and it is also used of the Tabernacle at Shiloh. 1 Sam. i. 7-24; iii. 15.

It is maintained by those who have adopted the extreme views of the Wellhausen school, that the distinction between priests and Levites is not recognized in Deuteronomy, and was only introduced, after the Exile, by the priestly invention of the Middle Books of the Pentateuch. But in Deut. xviii. 1, we read of "the priests, the Levites, the whole tribe of Levi" that is, not only the priests, but also the Levites, who, between them, made up the whole tribe of Levi. Both priests and Levites belonged to the one tribe, and thus both could justly be called Levites. But in Deut. xviii. 3, we read of the priest; in verse 6 of the Levite. When in Deut. xvii. 9-18, we read of "the priests, the Levites," or, in Deut. xxi. 5; xxxi. 9, of "the priests, the sons of Levi"—there is no identification of priest with Levites, but only a recognition of the fact that the priests were descendants of the patriarch Levi—as, of course, the Levites were also. (See 2 Chron. xxiii. 18; xxxv. 27; xxx. 17. Jer. xxxiii. 18-21.) Priests and Levites are, in fact, considered in Deuteronomy as essentially one great whole, and priests are spoken of as Levites or sons of Levi, to bring into prominence their belonging to the sacred tribe, and thus shew their priesthood to be rightful and authoritative. (Oehler, in Herzog, vol. viii. p. 350.) The assertion that Deuteronomy speaks of a homeless and wretched priest caste, and of the Levites as no longer settled in the towns assigned them in Num. xxxv., but as scattered sojourners and strangers in the towns at large, is based on various errors. The Levites were necessarily "within the gates" of the general community, from the fact that the towns granted them had a general lay population as well. The Levites were not by any means their only inhabitants. (Ewald's *Geschichte*, vol. ii. p. 403.) Moreover, it could readily be foreseen that the possession of the 48 Levitical towns would be a work of time; it was never, in fact, wholly accomplished, and hence many Levites had to seek their home where they could. As to the modifications in Deuteronomy, of the law for the support of the Levites, they are at once explained as provisions against the foreseen neglect of former laws for their maintenance.

[2] Deut. xvii. 14.

ures,[1] like the despots around, speak of wise foresight, which provides for every contingency. Strange to say, even in this section, so foreign to the ancient polity of the nation, the reason assigned for not "multiplying horses" is such as would be natural to a lawgiver who had been in Egypt, and knew what his people had suffered there. They are not to do it, because it would "cause the people to return to Egypt," the great breeding place of horses for Palestine.[2] They had endured enough at its hands in the past, and its moral corruptions were too dangerous. It was statesmanlike to look forward to the introduction of kings as possible; but what fitness could there have been in such counsels, if given for the first time in the reign of Josiah, more than four hundred years after monarchy had been established?

The spirit of Deuteronomy breathes out in the intimation that Jehovah would raise up to the nation an order of prophets,[3] as His divinely-commissioned spokesmen; the counterparts, in fact, in this respect, of Moses himself. It is in keeping with the spirit of the relations of Jehovah to them from the time of their leaving Egypt. Eldad and Medad, and the seventy elders, had prophesied at Sinai, and Moses had shewn his noble breadth of mind in the wish that not only they, but all the people of Jehovah, were prophets.[4] It was, therefore, natural that he should anticipate the rise of men in after times, moved by the same Divine impulse; for

[1] The emperor of Morocco is reported to have a subterranean treasury full of untold wealth in coin, jewels, and precious stones. It is, they say, guarded by soldiers, who never come up to day again, after being set over it.

Speaking of the treasury of Surajah Dowlah, Clive said: "I walked through vaults thrown open to me alone, and piled on both sides with gold and jewels." Gleig's *Life of Clive*, p. 297.

[2] 1 Kings x. 26.

[3] Deut. xiii. 2 6; xviii. 15, ff.; where "an order of prophets," may be read instead of "a prophet." This latter sense, however, is included; see Acts iii. 22.

[4] Num. xi. 26, 27, 29.

if the ritual service was left to the priest, the moral training of the nation was the task of the prophetical order.

The Book of Leviticus had commanded[1] that the Hebrew should love his fellow-Hebrew as himself;[2] but it was reserved to Deuteronomy to lift the thoughts of the nation to a still nobler ideal. It, first, expressly commends the Eternal to human love, and thus formally exalts religion into the homage of the soul of God. It discloses Jehovah as condescending to reveal His love to His people, and demanding their love in return.[3] He proclaims Himself as the faithful God, who keeps covenant with them that love Him. Mere outward service is treated as only the husk and shell of religion, the fervour of the heart as its essence. Such a principle, at such an age, is a unique phenomenon in the history of the world; for everywhere else, till Christianity appeared, religion and morality were distinct ideas. To perform prescribed rites constituted a man religious, apart from the practice of virtue. But in Deuteronomy the germs of the highest conception possible to humanity were embodied—germs which slowly spread their influence, age after age, and rightly claim as their fruit, all that was good and holy in the prophets and righteous men of the ancient people of God.

As became a religion thus based on love towards Jehovah, a spirit of tenderness largely pervades the Fifth Book. In the earlier Law, Moses had said, "Ye shall not afflict any widow or fatherless child,"[4] and had cared for the foreigner that "he should not be vexed."[5] He had denounced

[1] Lev. xix. 18.

[2] This is what is meant by "neighbour" in its old restriction, as shewn in the earlier clause of the verse.

[3] Deut. vi. 5; x. 12; xi. 1; xiii. 18; xix. 9; xxx. 6; vii. 9, 13; x. 15; xiii. 3; xxx 16, 20; iv. 37; vii. 7, 8; x. 18.

[4] Exod. xxii. 22. [5] Exod. xxii. 21.

usury; had required that raiment taken in pledge be returned before night;[1] and in many other details had vindicated the Divine pity and compassion. In Deuteronomy widows and orphans are protected with equal care,[2] and so is the foreigner.[3] The poor come under its guardian shadow.[4] Usury, and goods given in pledge are the subject of special laws.[5] As in Exodus, even a beast is commended to the kindness of all.[6] The lot of the slave is ameliorated.[7] Woman is protected by different enactments.[8] The power of fathers over their children is restrained within gentler bounds than before.[9] The property of foreigners is secured, and provision made for the preservation to families of their inheritance.[10]

That a book breathing a spirit of such lofty morality, and embodying such conceptions of the nature of true religion, should be the work of forgers of a late age, is inconceivable. Its claims, in every page, to have been spoken or written by Moses would, in that case, be the frequent repetition of a conscious untruth by writers who, in all other respects, were ideal moralists. But the book speaks for itself. It expressly states its Mosaic authorship,[11] and the internal evidence of its contents bears out this testimony. Its grand addresses to the tribes have a living power which witnesses to their genuineness. Every sentence carries us back to the wilderness life, or the scenes of the Holy Mount, or the days of Egyptian slavery. The words glow in each line with the emotions of a great leader, recounting to his contemporaries the marvellous story of their common experience. The

[1] Exod. xxii. 25, 26.
[2] Deut. xiv. 29; xvi. 11; xxvii. 17; xxvi. 12.
[3] Deut. xxiv. 14.
[4] Deut. xv.
[5] Deut. xxiii. 19; xxiv. 6, 10, etc.
[6] Deut. xxii. 1, 6, 9; xxv. 4.
[7] Deut. xv. 12; xxi. 10; xxiii. 16.
[8] Deut. xxi. 10; xxii. 13; xxiv. 1, ff.
[9] Deut. xxi. 18.
[10] Deut. xxiii. 24; xxv. 5, ff.
[11] Deut. xxxi. 24.

enthusiasm they kindle, even to-day, though obscured by translation, reveals their matchless adaptation to the circumstances under which they were first spoken. Confidence for the future is evoked by remembrance of the past. The same God who had done mighty works for the tribes, since the Exodus, would cover their head in the day of battle with the nations of Palestine, soon to be invaded. Their great Lawgiver stands before us, vigorous in his hoary age, stern in his abhorrence of evil, earnest in his zeal for God, but mellowed in all relations to earth by his nearness to heaven. The commanding wisdom of his enactments, the dignity of his position as the founder of the nation and the first of prophets, enforce his utterances. But he touches our deepest emotions by the human tenderness that breathes in all his words. Standing on the verge of life, he speaks as a father, giving his parting counsels to those he loves ; willing to depart and be with the God he has served so well, but fondly lengthening out his last farewell to the dear ones of earth. No book can compare with Deuteronomy in its mingled sublimity and tenderness. "It is," says Eichhorn, "the final survey of his laws by the Lawgiver himself, in which he explains what needs explanation, and improves what needs improvement. We have in it the last utterance of the father and leader of his people. The heat and fervour of every line shew that countless emotions oppressed the soul of the great man as he wrote, and stamp the book, in every part, as composed at the mouth of the grave."[1] "Deuteronomy," says Moses Stuart, "appears to my mind, as it did to that of Eichhorn and Herder, as the earnest outpourings and admonitions of a heart which felt the deepest interest in the welfare of the Jewish nation, and

[1] Eichhorn, *Einl.*, vol. iii. p. 284.

realized that it must soon bid them farewell."[1] To defend the theory of its being a forgery, by urging that Ecclesiastes is attributed to Solomon, though not his composition, is to cite a case in no way parallel. Reflections on the vanity of life and its mysteries, put into the mouth of the wise king, do no wrong to any one, and befit the character of the supposed author. But to impose a code of laws on a nation, as given by Jehovah; to take heaven and earth to witness that Moses is the speaker and writer; to claim, in his name, to control the whole public and private life of the community, for all time, by counterfeit statutes and mock blessings and curses, would be inconceivable audacity on the part of an author of easy conscience, and an impossible crime to any mind capable, by its lofty morality and nearness in spirit to God, of writing such a book. Nor is it the least difficulty in the theory of its being a forgery, that the nation accepted it, at once, as a book known to their fathers for eight hundred years, which any one could in a moment have disproved.

An old Jewish apologue, quoted by Herder, may help us to realize the feelings with which the Law was received at first, and the joy at its re-discovery under Josiah. "The enemy of all good," it tells us, "learned that God had given earth a law in which all the wisdom of heaven lay hidden, and destined in the end to destroy the kingdom of darkness among men. He therefore hastened swiftly to this world, and asked it: 'Earth, where is that law which God has given thee?' But the earth answered, 'The Lord knows the ways of His wisdom; I know them not.' Then he went to the sea, and to the depths beneath it, but the sea and the nether abyss said: 'It is not in me.' Next,

[1] Stuart's *Hist. of the O. T. Canon*, § 3.

he went to the kingdom of the dead, but the shades answered, 'We have heard the report of it from afar.'

"After he had wandered through the world, and through all the heathen nations which served him, he came to the desert of Arabia and saw a man whose countenance shone—Moses. Going to him in the guise of an angel of light, he sought to flatter him, and offered to be his disciple. 'Man of God,' said he, 'who possessest the wisdom of Jehovah, and hast all understanding of Elohim, and hast hidden all the secrets of the universe in thy law'—

"'Silence,' cried Moses, with a look that changed Satan at once into his own form—'silence! The law is Jehovah's, not mine; with Him is wisdom and understanding, counsel and might;[1] as for man, the fear of Jehovah, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding.'[2]

"Ashamed, Satan fell back and went away, and the angels of God appeared, to minister to the lowly Great One. They taught him and he taught them. The Prince of the Law became his guardian spirit, and God Himself answered from the cloud—'Keep ye the law of Moses My servant. Because he was humble, and gave Me the glory, I have crowned him with glory for ever.'"[3]

To believe that a Book or Books, round which a veneration so touching had gathered centuries before Christ, and

[1] Prov. viii. 14. [2] Job xxviii. 28.

[3] Herder, *Geist vom Ebräischen Poesie*, vol. ii. p. 65. The preservation of the Law from the earliest times was doubtless much facilitated by the custom, still prevalent in the East, of committing sacred books to memory. Even at this day persons can be found in Egypt who, though illiterate, can repeat the whole Koran by heart; and it was the boast of the Rabbis of the Middle Ages, that if every copy of the Talmud were destroyed, their disciples could reproduce it, without omission or error, from memory. Dr. Grove mentions also, that in the service of the Day of Atonement in the Samaritan Synagogue, the recitation of the Pentateuch was continued through the night, without even the feeble lamp which, on every other night of the year but this, burns in front of the holy books. The two priests and a few of the people knew the whole Pentateuch by heart. *Vacation Tourists*, 1861, p. 346.

the rediscovery of which, in Josiah's day, revolutionized the history of Israel for all future ages, were mere forgeries of well-nigh a thousand years after the date they claim, seems to require much greater credulity than is shewn in frankly accepting them as what they assert themselves to be.

CHAPTER XI.

THE PASSOVER OF JOSIAH.

THE recovery of the ancient Book of the Law by Hilkiah had an immediate influence on the great religious movement which had already been some years in progress. How far the purification of the land from idolatry had gone before the finding of the Law is not told, but it is expressly said that its result was, that Josiah "put away,"[1] as far as possible, "the necromancers," who pretended to raise the dead and learn the future from them;[2] those professing to be possessed by an evil spirit, and to work spells and predict by its means;[3] the teraphim or household gods,[4] cherished as the protectors of a house or authors of its good fortune; and the idols, called in contempt "blocks of wood," and "abominations," that were discovered in Judah and Jerusalem.[5]

But all this was only a preparation for the formal restoration of the national religion. Many of its rites had fallen

[1] 2 Kings xxiii. 24. The verb means, to destroy, to burn, as well as to remove.

[2] 1 Sam. xxviii. 7, ff. Deut. xviii. 11. Lev. xix. 31; xx. 6, 27. The punishment of these sorcerers was death by stoning.

[3] Fürst, and Mühlau und Volck. Lev. xix. 31; xx. 27. Deut. xviii. 11.

[4] See vol. i. pp. 403, 412; iii. p. 168.

[5] 2 Kings xxiii. 24; see Deut. iv. 25; Exod. xx. 4, 23; Deut. v. 8; vii. 25 (idols to be burned) Exod. xxxii. 20; Lev. xxvi. 30; Deut. xiii. 10; xvii. 5 (Hebrew idolaters to be stoned). Exod. xxiii. 13, 24; Lev. xxvi. 1; Deut. xxvii. 15 That Saul (1 Sam. xxviii. 3) should have tried to banish necromancers from the land, shews that he knew the requirements of the Law. It must, then, have been at least as old as his day.

into disuse, or were not carried out with strict adherence to prescribed form. Hezekiah had kept the Passover with great solemnity nearly a century before, but it had probably been neglected during the long reign of Manasseh. It was now possible, however, to celebrate the feast with hitherto unknown exactness. Full details respecting its proper observance were to be found in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy,[1] and these were ordered to be studied by all the priests and Levites.[2] A great Passover was then appointed to be held on the 14th day of Nisan, nearly our April, the first or "flower month;" known also as Abib, "the month of earing;"[3] in accordance with the terms of the original commands on the subject.[4] Hezekiah had varied from the law where he thought it right to do so,[5] keeping the feast on the second month—Iyar, nearly our May—and permitting the strangers from the remnant of the Northern tribes, who had the excuse of ignorance, to join in it, though not legally "clean." No variation was now required. The enthusiasm of the people was for the time roused to the utmost by the finding of the Law, and they were eager to comply with it on every point.[6] Josiah was the soul of the revival in this, as in other directions. He, not the high priest or dignitaries, secured the enrolling of the ordinary priests in their respective divisions or "courses,"[7] or successive turns of service, and it was he especially who quickened their zeal by animating words,

[1] Exod. xii. 3, 43; xiii. 5. Lev. xxiii. 4. Num. xxviii. 16; ix. 2. Deut. xvi. 1.

[2] 2 Chron. xxxv. 2.

[3] "Coming into ear."

[4] Geikie's *Life of Christ*, vol. ii. p. 278. Graetz says the Passover was held in the spring of B.C. 621.

[5] 2 Chron. xxx. 2, 17–20.

[6] 2 Chron. xxxiv. 32, 33. Deut. vi. 5. Jer. xxii. 15.

[7] Literally, "their watches." Gesenius translates the words "*confirmed* in their duties, or offices."

and saw to their being carefully instructed in the details of their duties, according to the letter of the law.[1]

Priests and Levites, the sacred caste,[2] and as such the official teachers of the Law, were, further, sent through the country, to instruct the whole people in the preparations it demanded for the Passover, and in the general knowledge of its precepts.[3] Levites, strictly so called, were directed to bring back the Ark, from the spot where it had been hidden during the reigns of Manasseh and Amon, to its old place in the temple, it being their prerogative to carry it on their shoulders when it had to be moved.[4] Levites were now to bear it to the Holy Place,[5] which they alone could enter; priests lifting it, thence, into the Holy of Holies.[6] It was the last time they were to have this great honour, which their forefathers had enjoyed a thousand years before. Henceforth, the sacred chest was to remain permanently in

[1] Compare the exhortation of Hezekiah to the priests in similar circumstances, 2 Chron. xxix. 5-11. It is very noteworthy that both priests and Levites (ver. 4) are called Levites in ver. 5. How utterly this language, in a book so late as 2 Chron., dating from the Persian age, explodes the theory of the late origin of the Middle Books of the Pentateuch, on the ground that they sharply discriminate between priests and Levites, contrary to the usage in Deuteronomy!

[2] Exod. xxviii. 41; xl. 15. Num. xviii. 6; iii. 10, 12, 45.

[3] In the Hebrew text the teachers "of all Israel," that is, of Judah, Jerusalem, and the remnant of the Ten Tribes, are called "Levites," which in this case also, contrary to the new critics, must include priests, if they, alone, are not meant. Many manuscripts read for Levites, the Mibnim, or "instructed," "well-skilled," and this is the word used for the teachers of the Law, the precursors of "the Scribes," in Neh. viii. 7-9, x. 29; Ezra viii. 16. See Leyrer and Naegelsbach in Herzog, vols. iv. p. 170; xiii. p. 733. See also Deut. xxiii. 10; 2 Chron. xxx. 22; Mal. ii. 7.

[4] Num. iv. 15; vii. 9; x. 21. [5] Thenius, *Die B. d. Könige*, p. 434.

[6] Keil, *B. d. Chronik*, p. 377. The Rabbis say that Josiah concealed the Ark, to prevent its being carried off to Babylon. Barclay's *Talmud*, p. 345. There was no Ark in the second temple, and 2 Macc. ii. 4, perhaps on the strength of Jer. iii. 16, attributes this to its concealment by Jeremiah, for which there is no ground. Hitzig thinks that it had fallen to pieces from old age and decay, while hidden, in the time of Manasseh. But articles of wood, in the dry climate of the East, last for immense periods, as may be seen in any Egyptian collections. Neither in Jer. iii. 16, nor elsewhere, is it said that it was destroyed, or that it perished during the reign of Manasseh. See Graf, *Der P. Jeremia*, on iii. 16.

the Holy of Holies, and the Levites were to attend exclusively to the ritual of the temple and its minor duties, taking care, above all, that every detail of the legal prescriptions was exactly observed by the crowds who came up to the temple, or to the feasts. The Levitical purity of the worshippers; the provision of wood, salt, etc., for the altar; the inspection of victims for sacrifice, and their being properly slaughtered; the superintendence of the Passover, and of the other feasts, constituted from this time their distinctive office.[1]

The task before the Commission deputed to instruct the people for the approaching Passover would have been easy, even with only the details of ritual in the Books of the Law. Besides these, however, they had subordinate helps of the greatest value, in ancient manuscripts[2] of the forms used by David and Solomon, which supplied precedents and explanations of the highest authority. That such written documents should have existed in the seventh century before Christ, and that they should have survived the stormy years of the persecution, is a striking proof that other documents, such as the Books of the Law, may also have existed from early times, though till Josiah's reign we have no intimation respecting them; for these Service Books of the earliest days of the monarchy are noticed only in this casual allusion, centuries after their composition.[3]

[1] *Rabbi Saloman*, quoted by Keil, *B. d. Chron.*, p. 376.

[2] 2 Chron. xxxv. 3.

[3] The new critics try to escape this difficulty by saying that we should understand "precepts," or "ordinances," rather than writings. But, as Bertheau well says, we should then, as in 2 Chron. xxix. 25, have had, "according to the commandment of David, etc." Two words are used. The first, K'tab, occurs in the Old Testament twelve times, and each time is translated "writing." The second, Michtab, occurs eight times, and is, also, always translated "writing." K'tab is, in fact, a word of the later Hebrew, for the earlier, Saipher, a book. See Ezra ii. 62; Neh. vii. 64; Dan. x. 21. It is found in Syriac (Kotob), in Arabic (Ketibe), and in Ethiopic, with

Minute instructions were further given to the Levites themselves. They were to minister in the temple, as in the days of David and his great son; a section of each Levitical "House" or sub-clan[1] being set apart for the service of each "House" or sub-clan of the people.[2] Instructions were also given them how to kill the Passover lamb properly, when the feast came, and to "sanctify"[3] themselves by washing, before they handed the blood to the priest; how, also, to prepare the lambs for the people, in strict accordance with the Divine injunctions "by the hand of Moses," in the written Law just recovered.[4]

The approach of the great day found multitudes assembled in Jerusalem, including many members of the Ten Tribes, from the North.[5] Vast numbers of persons, however, from poverty or ignorance, or from the difficulty of obtaining a paschal lamb or kid, had not provided themselves with them; for, as yet, no flocks were collected beforehand at Jerusalem for sale at the feast, as in later times. Thirty thousand lambs and kids, therefore, were distributed by the king among the poor, and those who from other causes were unsupplied. Three thousand bullocks from the crown pastures were added to this royal bounty, to provide materials for the seven days' feast that followed the Pass-

the same meaning, of a writing or book. Both verbs are from the word Katah, "to write." In 2 Chron. xxxiv. 13, we read of "Levite scribes." Their life, given to copying sacred or other writings, secured the preservation of those of the prophets, and was doubtless also, in large measure, given to transcribing parts or the whole of the Law.

[1] Literally, "House of the Fathers." [2] See ver. 12.

[3] 2 Chron. xxix. 5, 15; xxx. 3, 15. Ezra vi. 20.

[4] 2 Chron. xxxv. 6. The Levites had charge of killing the Passover lamb for every one who was not "clean." 2 Chron. xxx. 17. To the latest times it was the custom of each Israelite to slaughter his own lamb or kid, the place being the temple court, after the sanctuary was built. *Pesachim*, v. 6-8. But on special occasions, such as the Passovers of Hezekiah, Josiah, and Ezra, the slaughter of the lambs was committed to the Levites. 2 Chron. xxx., xxxv. Ezra vi.

[5] 2 Chron. xxxv. 18.

over.[1] The chiefs were no less liberal, giving great numbers of cattle and lambs and goats to the priests and Levites,[2] and to the people, for free offerings. Nor were the dignitaries of the temple[3] behindhand. The high priest, Hilkiah, of the line of Eleazar; Zechariah, apparently his deputy; and Jehiel, probably the head of the line of Ithamar,[4] gave 2,600 lambs and kids, and 300 oxen, to the priests, their subordinates, while six of the principal Levites,[5] officials, apparently, at the head of the working departments of the temple, its stores, protection, and oversight, gave their brethren 5,000 lambs and kids, and 500 oxen.

Thus, on the eve of the Passover, everything was ready. The priests, in their white robes, with bare feet and covered head, stood at their posts at the altar;[6] the Levites, in their successive courses, at their side, according to the king's command.[7] As the sun was setting, and before the stars appeared,[8] the lambs and kids were slaughtered and flayed by hundreds of Levites, the blood being handed by them in bowls to the priests, to sprinkle on the altar; each Levite having first washed himself in the temple laver. The part of the victims required for a burnt offering,[9] was then given back to each householder, who forthwith bore it to the

[1] Keil, p. 378.

[2] In Hezekiah's time the nobles gave away 1,000 oxen, and 10,000 sheep.

[3] The lay "princes" are called Sarim; those of the temple, "Nĕgidim." The words are, literally, "princes or rulers of the House of God."

[4] This line still survived after the Exile. See Ezra viii. 2.

[5] Levites of the same name as the first three here (verse 9) occur in the record of Hezekiah's feast. 2 Chron. xxxi. 12 15. But the names of priests were largely hereditary, or, perhaps, as Bertheau suggests, these were the names of "families" or "Houses."

[6] 2 Chron. xxx. 16.

[7] 2 Chron. xxxv. 4.

[8] Deut. xvi. 6. Exod. xii. 6. Lev. xxiii. 5. Num. ix. 3–5. Josephus says that the lambs were slain from the ninth to the eleventh hour, from three to five o'clock. *Bell. Jud.*, VI. ix. 3. See *Pesachim*, v. 3.

[9] Lev. iii. 6–17.

priest, to lay on the altar.[1] The same was done with the oxen during the next week, parts of them being sacred to the altar, while the rest remained the property of the offerer, to whom it was returned.[2] The cooking of the flesh for the people, however, was reserved, on this occasion, to the Levites, perhaps to guard against ritual errors when everything was virtually new. The lambs and young goats were duly roasted, according to the Law,[3] but the "holy flesh,"[4] as the slaughtered oxen were called, was baked or boiled in pots, kettles, and other vessels.[5] The strain put on the priests and Levites was almost beyond human endurance, for they could take neither rest nor refreshment till their labours were over. Each course of both Levites and priests had only snatches of leisure. Not only that night, but each day of the following week, the whole time from morning till evening, during the seven days of unleavened bread, was occupied in preparing and burning the vast multitude of offerings from so many victims. During all these days the services of the temple choir were brought into requisition at intervals—the singers of the famous clan of Asaph chanting, in relays, the psalms for the season, appointed centuries before, by David, Asaph, and Jeduthun. Neither they, indeed, nor the watchers of the gates, could leave the temple, but had their food brought to them by the Levites.[6]

[1] Keil thus explains 2 Chron. xxxv. 12.

[2] The fat of the oxen belonged to the altar as a thank-offering. Lev. iii. 3.

[3] Exod. xii. 7-9.

[4] 2 Chron. xxxv. 13, the "holy."

[5] 1 Sam. ii. 13, 14. The word is the same for cooking both the lamb and the oxen, but the addition of "by fire" marks that the lamb was roasted. The boiling or baking is prescribed in Lev. viii. 31; Exod. xxix. 31; Lev. vi. 28.

[6] 2 Chron. xxxv. 15. It is striking and instructive to read in verse 16, that all the arrangements for this great feast were made according to the commandment of King Josiah, a young man of 26; not according to that of the high priest. By "burnt offerings" (verse 16) are to be understood the usual offerings at the Passover and feast of unleavened bread; not "burnt offerings" in the strict sense. None of these were burnt at the Passover season except the daily sacrifice. Num. xxviii. 4

Such a Passover had never been held since the days of Samuel; for the requirements of the Law had never before been so minutely observed.[1] Nor was the rejoicing of the following week less remarkable.

The influence of such a celebration of the great national feast was felt in all directions. It proclaimed the full restoration of the worship of Jehovah, and kindled an enthusiasm for His service in many. Hebrews from all parts of the land had been present, and carried back to Shechem, Shiloh, Samaria, and elsewhere, a loyalty to the temple at Jerusalem, which continued till the destruction of the city by Nebuchadnezzar, and even after the Return.[2] So great an event, indeed, was it thought, that Ezekiel dates the opening of his prophecies from it.[3]

It seems probable that we have in the eighty-first Psalm a relic of this great solemnity.[4] If so, we may picture to ourselves all the Levites "that could skill of instruments of music,"[5] and "the singers, the sons of Asaph,"[6] chanting and playing in mingled harmony, words still familiar to ourselves; the multitudes in the courts beneath kneeling in worship as the music rolled out its sounds.

"LXXXI. 1. Sing aloud[7] unto God, our Strength;
Make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob;
2. Lift up the psalm; sound the timbrel (ye choirs of Levites);
The pleasant lyre and the harp!
3. Blow the trumpet on the new moon (of the month Nisan, ye priests)!
On the full-moon; the day of our Passover feast!
4. For the feast is a law for Israel; an ordinance of the God of Jacob;

[1] So, rightly, Keil. *Clericus.*
[2] Jer. xli. 5. Ezra iv. 2.
[3] In Ezek. i. 1, the date used is the thirtieth year from Josiah's Reformation and Passover; that is, in the fifth year of King Jehoiakim's captivity. Graetz, vol. ii. p. 321.
[4] Delitzsch. Moll. Graetz.
[5] 2 Chron. xxxiv. 12.
[6] 2 Chron. xxxv. 15.
[7] **Ps. lxxxi.**

5. He ordained it in Joseph,[1] when He went forth to judge[2] the land of Egypt.[3]

"In that day I heard the voice of One, whom as yet I knew not, saying:—
6. I have lifted the slave burden from Israel's shoulders,
I have set his hands free from the basket (in which he carried the earth).[4]
7. Thou calledst (on Me) in trouble, and I delivered thee from it;
I answered thee through the veil of the thunder cloud,
I put thee to the test at the waters of Meribah![5]
8. Hear, O My people, and I will give thee counsel;
O Israel, would'st thou but hearken to Me!'

"9. (This is what I said to thee!) 'There shall be no god of a foreign people in thee;
Thou shalt not worship any god of a foreign land.
10. I, I am Jehovah, thy God, who led thee up out of Egypt;
Open wide thy mouth, and I will fill it!'

"11. But My people would not hearken to My voice;
Israel was not willing to obey Me,
12. So I gave them over to the hardness of their own hearts;
They walked in their own counsels!

"13. O that My people would hearken to Me;
O that Israel would walk in My ways!
14. How soon[6] would I humble their foes,
And turn My hand against their oppressors![7]
15. The haters of Jehovah would submit themselves to Him,
And the prosperity of Israel would endure for ever!
16. I would feed them[8] with the fat of wheat;[9]
With honey from (the combs, in the clefts of) the rock, would I satisfy thee (O Israel)!"

[1] A pathetic name for the Hebrews collectively.
[2] Literally, "against." [3] Exod. xi. 4; xii. 27.
[4] On the Nile labourers always carry the rubbish or earth of excavations, etc., in small baskets, on their heads. I have seen crowds of both sexes doing so, at Thebes and elsewhere.
[5] Exod. xvii. 7. The word "Selah," here, means that at this point the crowd bent the head, while the music played an interlude, giving time for solemn thought. Hitzig, and Delitzsch.
[6] Literally, "as in a moment." [7] From the verb, "to distress, harass, vex."
[8] Delitzsch continues the first person here. This Psalm was sung in the second temple on the fifth day of the week. Barclay's *Talmud*, p. 254. [9] Deut. xxxii. 14.

Yet, amidst all the enthusiasm, which found expression in a festival so strictly observed and so numerously attended, there were many who remained indifferent and secretly hostile. The reformation had been imposed on the nation by the will of the king, and had not the depth of a spontaneous movement. The tone of the Psalm just given is sad, amidst its call to rejoicing; it bewails the stubborn ungodliness of the community as a whole, and pleads for a better frame of mind. The same characteristics shew themselves in the language of Jeremiah in an address delivered about this time. He hints at deadly opposition to himself for his plain speaking, and even at conspiracy against Josiah for his religious innovations. First addressing his brethren the prophets, he urges them to diligence; impressing on the people of Judah and Jerusalem, the nature, obligations, and penal sanctions, of the covenant into which they had entered with Jehovah, through their representatives, the elders. The Book of the Law in which it was embodied had been unknown for generations, and it was therefore imperative that the population, as a whole, should be made familiar with it, as the only hope of such an intelligent obedience as would secure its promises and avert its curses. Hence the prophet began:

"XI. 2. Hear ye,[1] (O my brother prophets,) the words of this covenant,[2] speak thus to the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem; 3. Thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel: Cursed is the

[1] **Jer. xi. 1-5.**

[2] The word "covenant," as the name for the "Book of the Law," found by Hilkiah, or for its most distinguishing feature, is of constant recurrence in the different Books of the Pentateuch; *e.g.*, Exod. ii. 24; vi. 4, 5; xix. 5; xxiv. 7, etc. Lev. ii. 13; xxvi. 9. Num. x. 33; xiv. 44; xxv. 13. Deut. iv. 13, 23, 31; v. 2, 3; vii. 2, 9, 12; viii. 18; ix. 9, 11, 15; xxix. 1, 9, etc. See, also, 2 Kings xxii. 8; xxiii. 2. 2 Chron. xxxiv. 30. There can be no doubt that the prophet refers to the covenant made for the nation, by Josiah and the elders, and based on the "Book of the Law" recently discovered.

man who obeys not the words of this covenant,[1] 4. which I commanded your fathers in the day when I led them from the land of Egypt,[2] a fiery furnace (to them)—terrible as the furnace in which iron is smelted[3]—and said, 'Obey My voice, and do My will, according to all that I command you; so shall ye be My people, and I will be your God.'[4] 5. That I may fulfil the oath[5] which I swore to your fathers; to give them a land flowing with milk and honey,[6] as is the case this day.

"Then answered I (Jeremiah, when God spoke thus to me), Amen, O Jehovah!"

A Divine commission to make known all the words of the new-found Law, throughout the kingdom, was at the same time given to the prophet.

"6. Then Jehovah said to me,[7] Read aloud all these words in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem, saying: 'Hear ye the words of this covenant, and do them! 7. For I have earnestly exhorted your fathers ever since the day when I brought them up out of the land of Egypt, to this present time, from early morning on, urging them, continually, saying, "Obey My voice!" 8. But they did not listen, or incline their ear, but walked, each, in the stubbornness of his evil heart, and therefore have I brought upon them all the words of this covenant which I commanded them to do, but which they have not done.'"

How long Jeremiah was occupied in this mission through the land, making known the details of the newly discovered

[1] Deut. xxvii. 26.

[2] It is clear from these words that Jeremiah either honestly believed that the "Book of the Law," just found, was the genuine ancient record of God's words to Israel at Sinai, or that he pretended to believe it was, and palmed it off on his fellow-prophets and the people as such. The new critics may think it a light matter to charge the prophet with wilful fraud, but most people will hold their doing so as a very grave immorality.

[3] Deut. iv. 20. Job vi. 12. Isa. xlviii. 10. 1 Kings viii. 51. Jer. xi. 4.

[4] This is a reference to Lev. xxvi. 3, 12, and Exod. vi. 7; xxix. 45. Deut. xxvii. 15-26. How could they then have been composed after the Captivity?

[5] Gen. xv. 18; xxii. 16; xxiv. 7; xxvi. 3; l. 24. Exod. xiii. 5, 11; xxxiii. 1. Num. xiv. 16, 30; xxxii. 11. Deut. i. 8, 35; vi. 10, and eleven times more.

[6] Exod. iii. 8-17; xiii. 5; xxxiii. 3. Lev. xx. 24. Num. xiii. 27; xiv. 8; xvi. 13, 14. Deut. vi. 3; xi. 9; xxvi. 15; xxvii. 3; xxxi. 20.

[7] Jer. xi. 6-8.

Law, is not said. But, however successful with individuals, he had to lament the persistent obduracy of vast numbers. It would even seem, as already said, that the heathen party plotted secretly against Josiah, for his reforms; accompanied, as they had been, by the slaughter of the idol priests, in accordance with the injunctions of the Law.[1] For, with all the gentleness and love of the Pentateuch, in many utterances, a spirit of fierce sternness towards idolatry marked it as only a temporary code, to be one day superseded by the sacred charity of Jesus Christ. Blood had, indeed, been shed by Manasseh, but Josiah also had shed it, and that on the very altars. The one persecution had brought a reaction in favour of the worship of Jehovah; the other was now preparing a revulsion in favour of heathenism.

"9. And Jehovah further said to me,[2] There is a conspiracy among the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. 10. They have returned to the iniquities of their early[3] forefathers, who refused to hear My words; and they, (in this day,) have gone after other gods, to serve them. The House of Israel and the House of Judah have broken My Covenant, which I made with their fathers. 11. Therefore, thus says Jehovah: Behold, I bring evil on them, which they shall not be able to escape; when they cry to Me, I will not listen to them. 12. The towns of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem will go and cry to the gods to whom they burn incense, but they will give them no help in the time of trouble. 13. For thy gods, O Judah, are become as many as thy cities, and ye have set up in Jerusalem as many altars to The Shame as there are streets; altars to burn incense to Baal![4]

"14. But, (as for thee,) Jeremiah, do not pray for this people, nor lift up a cry or supplication for them, for I will not listen when they cry to Me in the time of trouble!

[1] Lev. xxvii. 28. Num. xxxiii. 52. Deut. vii. 2; xx. 16, 17. [2] Jer. xi. 9-17.

[3] Literally, "first." Jeremiah thus knew the history of the nation from the first—that is, he knew the Pentateuch.

[4] This and the previous verse are almost the same as chap. ii. 27, 28. Streets = open places. See chap. vii. 17.

"15. What has Judah, (once) My beloved,[1] to do in My House? She who only practises deceit?[2] Can vows, and the hallowed flesh (of offerings) ward from thee the calamity that threatens?[3] Then mayest thou indeed rejoice! 16. Jehovah called thee a green olive tree, fair, with goodly fruit,[4] but amidst the uproar of a mighty storm He has laid fire to it, and its branches are broken off (by the tempest.)[5] 17. For Jehovah of Hosts, who planted thee, has decreed evil against thee, for the wickedness of the House of Israel and of the House of Judah, which they have chosen to do—to provoke Me to anger by offering incense to Baal."

A still more bitter proof of the malignity of public feeling towards the friends of the old religion was now, however, to horrify the prophet. Living amongst his neighbours at Anathoth, with no suspicion of danger, a plot against his life was suddenly revealed to him. He was to realize the abiding truth, that a prophet has no honour in his native place.[6] His plain speaking had infuriated the worldly-minded priests of his village, till now, apparently, his head-quarters, though his mission often took him to Jerusalem, and had even of late required him to make preaching circuits over the whole country, in connection with the new religious covenant.

"18. Jehovah[7] made it known to me, and then only I knew it, when Thou shewedst me their doings. 19. I was like a house lamb[8] that is led (without dreaming of it) to the slaughter; I did not know that they had plotted evil against me, saying, 'Let us destroy the tree

[1] See Jer. xii. 7.

[2] To act as she does—to do wickedness? Bredenkamp, p. 111, and others.

[3] The received text is untranslatable. The version given is that of the Septuagint, Keil, Hitzig, Eichhorn, Ewald, De Wette (who has "iniquity"), Graf, Bredenkamp, *Gesetz u. Propheten*, p. 111.

[4] The individuals are so called.

[5] The figure seems to be that of a mighty wind, which has at once fanned and spread the fire and also broken off the branches. It refers to the ruin caused by Assyria and to be caused by Babylon, and includes the fall of the Ten Tribes. The storm is the wild confusion of war.

[6] St. Luke iv. 28.

[7] Jer. xi. 18-23.

[8] A pet lamb brought up in a household (2 Sam. xii. 3) is still common in the tents of Arabs, and was no less so among the Jews.

with its fruit,[1] and cut him off from the land of the living, that his name may be no longer remembered.' 20. But, O Jehovah of hosts, that judgest righteously, and tryest the reins and the heart,[2] let me see Thy vengeance on them ; for to Thee have I committed my cause.[3] 21. Therefore, Jehovah speaks thus against the men of Anathoth, who sought my life, saying (to me), 'Prophesy not[4] (thus), in the name of Jehovah, or you will die at our hands.' 22. For this cause Jehovah of hosts has said, 'Behold, I will punish them. The young men (fit for arms) shall die by the sword ; their (young) sons and their daughters shall die by the famine (of a siege), 23. and no remnant of them will be left ; for I will bring evil on the men of Anathoth in the year of their visitation."[7]

The old belief in temporal rewards and punishments had long been shaken. Asaph, in the seventy-third Psalm, had expressed the perplexity of thoughtful minds on the subject, and now Jeremiah was no less troubled at the prosperity of the men of Anathoth, who sought to murder him for speaking the words put into his lips by God.

"XII. 1. Thou art too righteous,[5] O Jehovah, for me to contend with Thee : yet, let me state my case to Thee, (to learn Thy will). Why is the way of the wicked prosperous ? Why does it go well with all who act so treacherously ? 2. Thou hast planted them and they have struck root : they grow vigorously and bear fruit : yet (they are hypocrites ; for) though Thou art near their mouths, Thou art far from their hearts.[6] 3. But Thou, Jehovah, knowest me, (that I am Thy true servant) ; Thou seest me, and triest my heart, (how it stands) towards Thee. Drag them away like sheep to the shambles, and give them up[7] to a day of slaughter ! 4. How long shall the land mourn (as it now does, in a sore drought) and the green of the whole country wither ? Through the wickedness of its inhabitants its cattle and birds are gone ; and yet (my enemies) say, ('God does not trouble Himself about our future :) we shall go on to the end unpunished !'"[8]

[1] Literally, "bread." In this case his hateful prophecies.
[2] To Thee the most secret thoughts are known.
[3] Literally, "on Thee do I roll my cause."
[4] Amos ii. 12.
[5] Jer. xii. 1-4.
[6] They honour Thee with their lips, but their heart is far from Thee.
[7] Literally, "consecrate, devote them."
[8] This seems the sense of the text.

God, however, answers that all the past is light compared with what awaits the prophet. His fellow-villagers have conspired to murder him; but, hereafter, even his own blood relations will turn against him. Jehovah now speaks:

"5. 'If when thou thus runnest[1] with the footmen,[2] they weary thee, how canst thou hope to contend with horses? If (up to this time) thou hast felt (in a measure) secure, as in a land of peace, what wilt thou do when thou art (as it were) in the tangled thickets of Jordan, (full of lions and beasts of prey)?'[3] 6. For even thy brethren and thy father's house;[4] even *they* have been faithless to thee: even they call after thee with loud voice, to seize thee, or strike thee down!'"

Yet his question does not remain unanswered. Anathoth and Judah will not always escape. The Divine judgment is approaching.

"7. I have forsaken My House,[5] says Jehovah: I have cast off My Heritage! I have given (Judah) the dearly beloved of My soul into the hand of her enemies! 8. My Heritage has been (fierce) against Me, as a lion in the *yaar*:[6] it roared against Me; therefore I have (withdrawn My love from it, and given it up to its enemies, as if I) hated it. 9. Is My Heritage a speckled vulture to Me, that vultures are gathered round about her,[7] to fall on her? Up, cause all the

[1] **Jer. xii. 5-7.**

[2] Footmen = running couriers. See vol. i. p. 424. Passing through the bazaar, one of the Pacha's beys rode past mounted on an Arab horse. A man in white cotton ran before him at full speed, clearing the way with voice and arms. Many runners have their dress set off with bright colours, and run very fast and long, but it kills them in a few years.

[3] The "swelling of Jordan" should be "the pride;" in allusion to the luxuriant thickets of tamarisks, poplars, reeds, etc., the special lair of all beasts of prey, especially of the lion. 2 Kings vi. 1-7. Jer. xlix. 19. Zech. xi. 3. See p. 157. Vol. iii. p. 427.

[4] They were priests; the family were priestly.

[5] By "house" the nation is meant.

[6] See vol. iv. p. 369. **Jer. xii. 8-14.**

[7] The zoölogical references are not clear in this passage. *Aȝȝ*, the first word, is rendered by Mühlau und Volck, and by Fürst, a vulture – the screamer. Gesenius makes it mean also, "a beast of prey." Tsabûa, the second word, is the participle of a verb, and means to be coloured or striped. Hence Mühlau und Volck render it both thus, and also as the word for a hyæna. Tristram thinks the hyæna meant,

beasts of the field to assemble, bring them hither to devour! 10. Many shepherds[1] (the leaders of invading hosts) have destroyed My vineyard; trodden My portion under foot; and turned it, once so beautiful, into a desolate wilderness. 11. It has been made a waste; it mourns aloud round Me, in its desolation; the whole land is made a desert, because no man has laid My warnings to heart. 12. The plunderers have come up to all the bare heights of the wilderness (pastures); for the sword of Jehovah devours from one end of the land to the other: no flesh has any peace. 13. They have sown wheat and reaped thorns: [2] they have tired themselves out and profited nothing. They will reap only shame at their harvest, because of the fierce anger of Jehovah!"

Yet the enemies of Israel will not escape unpunished.

"14. Thus saith Jehovah, against all my evil neighbours that touch the (land I have given as an) inheritance of My people Israel:—Behold I will pluck them up[3] from their (own) land, and I will pluck out the House of Judah from among them. 15. And after I have thus plucked them out, I will again have compassion on them, and bring them back, each to his own heritage, and to his own land. 16. And if they then learn the ways of My people—to swear by My name 'As truly as Jehovah lives,' as they taught My people to swear by Baal, they shall be received[4] into the midst of my people. 17. But if they will not obey, I will root out and utterly detroy such a nation, says Jehovah."

It may be that in the fiftieth Psalm we have another relic of these days, when Judah, under Josiah, had pledged itself anew in covenant with Jehovah.[5] In any case it is at least as old as Josiah's reign; possibly much older, and it is

N. H. B., p. 108. Arnold (Herzog, vol. ii. p. 29) translates it hyæna. But nearly all the critics prefer "vulture."

[1] Jer. vi. 3. The idea which suggested this use of the word "shepherd" is probably the terror felt by the settled fellahin of Judah at the wandering Arab "shepherds," whose life was plunder. Gen. xlvi. 34.

[2] Kotzim, a word which includes all prickly or thorny plants. Tristram, p. 428.

[3] As a plant.

[4] Literally "built." The return of the Moabites is mentioned in chap. xlviii, 47. That of the Ammonites in chap. xlix. 6. **Jer. xii. 15-17.**

[5] See Ps. l 5. Ewald assigns it to this time. Delitzsch and Moll merely give it as a Psalm of Asaph. Bredenkamp shews forcibly that it cannot be a Psalm of the Exile or after it, but comes to us from an earlier age. *Gesetz und Propheten*, p. 63.

of special interest, since it presents with unique clearness the prophetic teaching with respect to sacrifice, echoing the words of Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Micah. Its one great theme is, that the gross material idea of an offering or sacrifice, in itself securing peace with God, is worse than misleading; and that the thought of its being a service to the Almighty to make such gifts to Him, is baseless folly. Sacrifice is represented as the divinely appointed and sanctioned ratification of Jehovah's covenant with His people, but only when followed by a godly life, and presented by a sincere and humble penitent. The relation of the ritual law to the moral—a lesson of infinite value for all time—is proclaimed. "It is well," says the Psalmist in effect, "that the smoke of offerings should rise from the altar, but unless the incense of the heart rise with it, it profits nothing."

"L. 1. Jehovah, the God of gods, speaks,[1]
Calling the earth, from the rising of the sun to its going down.
2. Elohim shines forth out of Zion—the perfection of beauty!
3. Our God comes, and will not keep silence;
Fire devours before Him, and a great tempest is round about Him!
4. He calls to the heavens above, and to the earth,
That He is about to judge His people!
5. 'Gather my saints[2] together to Me:
Those who have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice,'
6. And let the heavens proclaim His righteousness,
For God Himself is judge! Selah.

"7. 'Hear, My people, and I will speak;
O Israel, and I will bear witness against thee!

[1] Psalm 50.

[2] Literally, "Hasidim;" rendered elsewhere in A. V., the "merciful," "godly," "holy." After the Return, this was the name assumed by the Hebrew Puritans, or given to them. They were known as the Aniyim, or humble, or afflicted; the Ebionim, or poor; and the Hasidim, or godly—names taken from the prophetical writings, or Psalms. Men like Mattathias, the father of the Maccabees, were chiefs of the Hasidim. See Herzog's *Encyk.*, vols. i. p. 386; ii. pp. 637, ff.; v. p. 578; xi. p. 501; xiii. pp. 735, ff.; xvii. p. 284.

I am Elohim, thy God![1]
8. I do not reprove[2] Thee for (failure in offering) thy (ordinary) sacrifices;
And as to thy whole-burnt-offerings, they are continually before Me.
9. (But what value are they to Me, or what pleasure?)
I need not take[3] any bullock out of thy house,
Or he-goats out of thy folds;
10. For every beast of the forest[4] is Mine,
And the cattle upon a thousand hills.[5]
11. I know all the fowls of the mountains,
And whatever moves on the field is before Me.
12. If I were hungry I would not tell thee;
For the world is Mine, and the fulness thereof!

"13. 'Do I eat the flesh of oxen?
Do I drink the blood of he-goats?
14. Offer (as sacrifice) to Elohim (the prayer of) thanksgiving,
And pay thy vows to the Most High,
15. And then call upon Me in the day of trouble;
So, shall I deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me!'"

But to the wicked, Elohim says:

"16. 'How darest thou recount My statutes,
Or take My covenant into thy lips,
17. Whilst thou yet hatest instruction,
And castest My words behind thy back?
18. When thou seest a thief thou runnest with him,
And thou art a partaker with adulterers.
19. Thou lettest thy mouth loose to evil,
And thy tongue plots deceit.

[1] Quoted from Exod. xx. 2. It is curious to notice in this Psalm the use of both Jehovah and Elohim as names for God. Jehovah occurs in verse 1, and yet through the rest of the Psalm He is called Elohim. The idea of deciding as to the age, etc., of documents, from the use of one sacred name or the other, is pressed altogether too far. Amongst ourselves one suppliant might address the Deity as "O Lord;" another as "O God;" but surely that says nothing. The "Elohim theory" has, in fact, been reduced by its advocates to the ridiculous. Learned and clever men, as we all know, are apt to get astride hobbies, and to ride them very wildly.

[2] The word also means "to punish."

[3] De Wette. Bredenkamp. Delitzsch.

[4] The *yaar*.

[5] A thousand beasts are on my hills. Bredenkamp. Ewald says "great beasts," for cattle.

20. As thou sittest, thou speakest against thy brother:
Thou layest a stumbling block for thine own mother's son.
21. Such things hast thou done, and, because I kept silence,
Thinkest thou I am altogether such an one as thyself?
But I will punish thee, and set the truth before thy eyes!'

"22. O mark ye this, ye that forget God,
Lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver!
23. He who offers (as his sacrifice) the prayer of thanksgiving,
Honours me aright; to him who takes heed to his walk,
Will I give to enjoy the salvation of God." [1]

Thus were the deep problems of life being pondered among the faithful worshippers of Jehovah in these years of revived hope and energy. Outward forms and ceremonies were being appraised at their true worth, and clearer insight gained as to the essentials of religion. In all ages, indeed, sincere spirits had felt that "bodily exercise profiteth little," but in an age of rites and symbols, when men were contented to have their religion performed for them by a professional caste, it was of supreme moment that Psalms such as this should strike the keynote of a higher and truer ideal. Still nobler realizations were close at hand. A few years more, and the prophet Habakkuk would anticipate the cardinal truth of Christianity, that the just shall live by his faith, not by works alone; an utterance repeated in the Epistles to the Romans, the Galatians, and the Hebrews as the exact expression of Christian doctrine.[2]

[1] For parallel passages see, among others, Hos. vi. 6; Mic. vi. 6-8; Isa. i. 11-15.
[2] Rom. i. 17. Gal. iii. 11. Heb. x. 38.

CHAPTER XII.

THE BEGINNING OF THE END.

JEHOAHAZ, 609 (three months).	KING OF EGYPT: NECHO II., 612–596.	FALL OF NINEVEH, 609–606.[2]
JEHOIAKIM, 609–599.	KINGS OF BABYLON: NABOPOLASSAR, died 604.[1]	BATTLE OF CARCHEMISH, 605.
	NEBUCHADNEZZAR, 604–562.	KING OF MEDIA: CYAXARES.

THE great Passover had been celebrated in the year B.C. 622, when Josiah was twenty-six years of age, and twelve years of his reign were yet to come. Respecting the events of these, however, we know virtually nothing, though they were, doubtless, stirring and momentous enough; exhibiting a steady growth of the internal strength of the nation, and the development of its resources. The thorough organization of the army, and the eager military spirit, which made possible the final catastrophe at Megiddo, imply a vast activity in every department of public life. Josiah had, in fact, shewn a precocious maturity in many directions. Marrying at the age of thirteen,[3] he had openly entered upon his great religious revolution when he was twenty, and before his famous Passover, had extended his sway, as already noticed, over the lands of the Ten Tribes, now inviting occupation through the decline of Assyria. The irruption of the so-called Scythian hordes in the earlier part of his reign must have necessitated thorough military organization, and this,

[1] Schrader, Riehm.
[2] Schrader.
[3] 2 Kings xxii. 1, compared with xxiii. 31.

perhaps, gave a colour, in one respect, to his general policy. It is not known how far his conquests extended, but they apparently embraced some of the neighbouring territories besides that of Israel. It is possible indeed that he may have dreamed, as Ewald fancies, of restoring the ancient glory of the kingdom of David,[1] but, if so, the result was in the end disastrous.

Earnest, able, and upright in his home government, and brilliant in his external relations, the life of the young king must, nevertheless, have been far from happy. Himself sincerely godly, he had fallen on evil times. His vigorous measures of religious reform, though supported by the fickle populace, were, as has been said, only outwardly successful. They had the fatal defect of being compulsory; mere acts of the ruling power unsupported by the good-will of the people; and hence they resulted in a revival of only the forms of religion, without an accompaniment of its spirit. Not that this lessens the admiration due to the fervent and noble zeal that inspired them. In the sacred record of illustrious Jewish kings, Josiah is worthily ranked with Hezekiah, who "wrought good and right and truth before Jehovah, his God."[2] He stands first, moreover, in the inspired page, among all the kings of the line of David, for his unswerving loyalty to the commands of Jehovah through life.[3] "Like him," says the Book of Kings, "there was no king before him, that turned to Jehovah with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the Law of Moses; neither after him arose there any like him."[4] Hezekiah may, in some points,[5] have shewn a more perfect apprehension of the will of God; but Josiah was the

[1] *Gesch.*, vol. v. p. 707.
[2] 2 Chron. xxxi. 20.
[3] 2 Chron. xxxiv. 2.
[4] 2 Kings xxiii. 25.
[5] 2 Kings xviii. 5.

supreme hero of absolute obedience to the letter of the Law; the most perfect type of a theocratic king, carrying out the requirements of the ancient Sacred Books to absolute fulfilment, alike in the outward extirpation of idolatry and superstition, and the legal execution of their votaries. "The remembrance of Josias," says the Son of Sirach, "is like the fragrant perfume of mingled incense, that is made by the art of the apothecary. It is sweet as honey in all mouths, and as music at a banquet of wine. He laboured with the happiest results in the conversion of his people, and rooted out the abominations of idolatry. He directed his heart unto the Lord, and held fast to godliness in the days of impiety."[1] As of Nerva, it might be said of him: "In evil times he dared to be good."[2] But his life must have been embittered by the dull inertness of the multitude, and the unscrupulous opposition of their leaders, who stooped to every art to raise popular feeling against his reforms.[3] The "remnant of Baal," moreover, standing aloof from him throughout, and powerful enough to overturn his whole work after his death,[4] were able, during his life, to prevent him carrying out his wishes even in his own house.[5] To the world he may have appeared alike prosperous and happy, but he must, in private, have been consumed with care and annoyance. His reign might be a triumph to the world: to himself it was a tragedy.

The years after Josiah's Passover were momentous in their events in the great world. In the year 620, Assurbanipal, the last great monarch of Nineveh, died, leaving a heritage

[1] Ecclus. xlix. 1–3. *Lib. Apoc.*, Fritzsche. *Jesus Sirach*, Augusti. *Exeg. H. Buch. zu d. Apoc. des A. T.*, Fritzsche.

[2] "Temporibusque malis ausus est esse bonus." This fine sentence is based on the words of Dion Cassius, Bk. 68, *Vit. Nervæ*.

[3] Jer. viii. 8. [4] Jer. vii., ff. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 8. [5] Zeph. i. 8.

of trouble to his successor; for the wars and revolts of so many years had brought the empire to the verge of dissolution. He was the first, if not the only, Assyrian king, who really cared for literature and learning, and was a genuine lover of books. When Babylonia had been crushed after its rebellion, the spoil most acceptable to him was the venerable contents of its great libraries. The main bulk of the tablets we possess came from the great library of Nineveh, which occupied one of the upper rooms in his palace at Kouyunjik. It stood within the grounds of the Temple of Nebo, and its walls were lined with shelves, on which were laid the clay books of Assyria, or the rolls of papyrus which have long since perished. The library consisted chiefly of copies of older works, brought from Babylonia, and diligently copied by numerous scribes, like the "proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah, King of Judah, copied out." Sennacherib had founded the library, by transferring to Nineveh the tablet books of Calah, but Assurbanipal really made it a great collection. The literary age of Assyria was, however, short-lived; before the century closed, Nineveh was taken by its enemies, and its palaces sacked and destroyed, the library sharing in the common overthrow. While Assyria was hopelessly sinking, and its utter extinction was evidently near, Media and Babylon were fast rising to take its place as the rulers of Western Asia. Cyaxares and Nabopolassar, their respective kings, were leagued together, to wrest as much as possible from the feeble monarch who sat on the throne of Nineveh. The Medes even penetrated to Asia Minor, and attacked the Lydians, as subjects of Assyria; but an eclipse of the sun, during a battle fought on the 30th September, B.C. 610, inclined both sides to peace. The gods seemed against a longer struggle. The comba-

tants also were perhaps exhausted, for the war had lasted five years.[1] A marriage confirmed the cessation of strife. Astyages, the son of Cyaxares, obtained as wife the daughter of Alyattes, the Lydian king. The Medes and Babylonians, moreover, rejoiced in a union of their two dynasties by the marriage of a daughter of Cyaxares to Nabopolassar's son—soon to become famous as the Nebuchadnezzar of the Bible.

Meanwhile, Psammetichus I. of Egypt, the founder of the great twenty-sixth dynasty—the Saite—had died, after a long reign of fifty-four years,[2] and was succeeded by his son, Necho II., the grandson, on the father's side, of Necho I., who had been a vassal of the Assyrians at the close of the twenty-fifth dynasty. The new king was at once enterprising, warlike, and able. To promote trade and increase his power in war, he caused a fleet of triremes to be built, on the Grecian model, in the harbours on the south of the isthmus of Suez, where his dockyards were still to be seen in the time of Herodotus.[3] Another fleet, on the Mediterranean coast, defended the north; but the two were hopelessly kept apart by the isthmus. Seti I., however, the father of Rameses II., had cut a canal across it eight hundred years before,[4] and Necho determined to imitate him. Forced labour was put in requisition to an immense extent to carry out the scheme; though, as has been always the rule in Egypt, the army of toilers was so badly cared for, that 120,000 of them are said to have died of hunger[5] or fatigue. It was an anticipation on a vast scale of one of the awful crimes of our own century, when no fewer than 10,000 men perished under Mehemet Ali, while digging the Mah-

[1] Herod., i. 74. [2] B.C. 666–612. [3] Herod., ii. 159.
[4] Ebers, in Riehm, p. 1370. [5] Herod., ii. 158.

moudieh canal.[1] But Necho's undertaking was not destined to be finished; an oracle having told him he was working for the Barbarians. The priests no doubt had in their minds the Phœnicians, for whose Indian trade a Suez canal would have been as great an advantage as, in our own day, it is for that of England—the Phœnicia of the nineteenth century. It was to have been broad enough to let two triremes row abreast, but the honour of finishing it was left to Darius, the Persian,[2] in a future age.

Yet, if Necho's canal was a failure, the crews of Phœnicians whom he had attracted to his fleets, enabled him to plan a great naval expedition which speaks for his bright intelligence. Herodotus informs us,[3] that he ordered some of his vessels, manned by Phœnicians, to sail from the Red Sea round Africa, returning by the Straits of Gibraltar; thinking they had only to circumnavigate Libya. But they were equal to the great task. Coasting the continent to the south, they ultimately reached and doubled the Cape of Good Hope, and got back to Egypt in safety, after a voyage of three years. Like his father Psammetichus, Necho had no foolish Egyptian prejudice against foreigners, and eagerly enlisted regiments of Greek mercenaries in his army; a fact which may in great part account for the ruinous defeat he inflicted on Josiah.[4]

In the general breaking up of the Assyrian empire, Necho fancied he had a fair opportunity of extending his empire, and of regaining part at least of the wide limits it had

[1] To some rulers, whom the world calls "great," the lives of men have been of little moment. More than 100,000 men perished in laying the foundations of St. Petersburg in 1714 and the following years, and the first Napoleon asked Metternich, "What were the lives of a million of men compared with the carrying out the schemes of a man like *him!*" Metternich's *Memoirs*, vol. i. ch. 8.

[2] Herod., ii. 158. [3] Herod., iv. 42.

[4] Brugsch, *Histoire d'Egypte*, vol. i. p. 252.

reached in ancient times, under Thothmes III. and Rameses II. Egypt was now strong, for Psammetichus had married the heiress of the Ethiopian royal House, and thus closed the rivalry between the native and foreign dynasties that had long torn the country in pieces, as Henry VII. ended the civil wars of England by uniting the Houses of Lancaster and York.[1]

Nineveh had not yet fallen, but it was within two or three years of its doom.[2] Nabopolassar and Cyaxares were busy in the East; and, while they were thus occupied, a bold dash might win Syria, perhaps as far as the Euphrates, for Egypt. Necho, in the year B.C. 610, resolved on the attempt; strong in his Tyrian sailors and Greek soldiers. Unfortunately for himself and for his country, Josiah, whose territories were not in the line of the Egyptian march, thought it his duty to oppose it. Necho's army seems to have landed, in part, from his triremes, at Acre; the rest marching by the coast route, and perhaps storming Gaza on the way,[3] for both Gaza and Ashdod were taken by him at this time, or very soon after. His course lay across the Plain of Esdraelon, but some time necessarily elapsed before the troops could advance. Meanwhile, all was bustle and preparation in Judah. Josiah was at present independent; but if Egypt conquered Syria, his position was lost. Tradition says that he adhered to his resolution to fight, in spite of the earnest entreaties of Jeremiah. Even Necho himself, indeed, tried to restrain him, but he rushed on his fate. Hearing of his advance, the Pharaoh sent envoys to

[1] *Ibid.*, vol. ii. p. 278.

[2] It was not known till within the last few years that Assyria had not fallen in 610 B.C. But the Bible, with minute accuracy, had written ages ago that "Necho went up against the king of *Assyria*." 2 Kings xxiii. 29.

[3] Jer. xlvii.

assure him that the war was directed solely against his own hereditary enemy, Nineveh. "It was the will of Heaven," he added, "that he should hasten on to Assyria,[1] and that Josiah should not interfere with him, lest he should be destroyed."[2] Nothing, however, could dissuade the Jewish king, now a man of thirty-nine. "He encouraged himself to fight against him."[3] in the belief that he could conquer, and marched his forces to Esdraelon. There, where Thothmes III. and Rameses II. had triumphed over the Hittites many centuries before, the issue was soon decided.[4] The battle was fought near Megiddo—apparently a town or village at the base of a spur of Carmel, halfway down the southern edge of the plain, and near the future Roman town of Legio, the present Ledjun,[5] although Conder, induced by the mention of "the passage of Megiddo" at "the fords of the Jordan," in the narrative of an Egyptian official which has come down to us from remote ages,[6] fancies that Megiddo was so often a battle-field, from its being the spot where the passage of the Jordan was to be resisted or attained. Hence he regards a mound of large size, now called Mujedd'a—a well-watered spot at the foot of Mount Gilboa, where the valley of Jezreel opens into the Jordan plain, southwest of Bethshean, as the true site of Megiddo. Mortally wounded by the Egyptian archers, so well known from the monuments, Josiah was removed from his war chariot, the splendour of which had drawn on him the notice of the

[1] This is the meaning of "the house wherewith I have war." 2 Chron. xxxv. 21.

[2] Keil's explanation of 2 Chron. xxxv. 21. Pharaoh uses the general word for God, without the article to refer it to the God of Judah, and expresses only his conviction that his enterprise is favoured by Heaven, which is on his side - a belief any heathen might entertain.

[3] *Septuagint.* Instead of "disguised himself" (2 Chron. xxxv. 22). Keil thinks "disguised himself" means, did contrary to his usual course—that of acting only according to the ascertained will of God.

[4] Vol. ii. p. 93. [5] Kiepert's *Map.* [6] Vol. ii. p. 544.

enemy, and having been laid on another kept in reserve, was driven off, dying, towards Jerusalem. But he got no farther than Rummānē—then Hadadrimmon—an ancient sanctuary of two Syrian gods, a few miles south of Megiddo. There he died, amidst such a wailing as was never forgotten in all future time. Similar outbursts of grief attended the sad procession which bore the slain hero to the capital, where the sight of his corpse threw the citizens into despair. Their hopes as a nation had perished with him. Never before had there been such a deep or universal lamentation. He was buried in a tomb he had prepared for himself, beside those of his fathers, with every manifestation of grief. Far and near the population joined in the loud demonstrations of sorrow usually restricted to professional mourners, piteous cries rising alike in town[1] and country of "O my Lord!" "O the glory of Israel!" His elegy was composed by Jeremiah, the sweetest singer of the Jewish Church after David, and was henceforth sung by the nation on the anniversary of the battle. Its tenor may perhaps be judged by the strain in which the calamities of Zedekiah are sung in the Book of Lamentations: "The anointed of Jehovah was taken in their pits: Of whom we said, 'Under his shadow we shall live among the heathen.'"[2] At a later time the prophet Zechariah could find no image for the unutterable lament over the death of the Messiah, but that for Josiah—"The mourning at Hadadrimmon, in the valley of Megiddon;"[3] and the "battle of the great day of God

[1] See an allusion to this in Jer. xxii. 18. [2] Lam. iv. 20.

[3] Zech. xii. 11. Rimmon is the Assyrian Ramman, the god of the air, who was the same as the Syrian deity Hadad, whose name is part of those of Benhadad and Hadadezer. Hadad-Rimmon was, in fact, the chief god of Damascus, being regarded there, not as the god of the air—an inferior divinity—but, as among the Assyrians, Baal, the Sun god, himself. Hence, the mourning of which Zechariah speaks, is the yearly festival, when the women mourned for the death of the Sun-god, slain, as it

Almighty" in the Apocalypse, so transcendent in its issues, has its scene at Armageddon, or the hill of Megiddo.[1] Nor did the mass of the people forget the hero. Long after the return from Captivity, we are told that "all the singing men and singing women spake of Josiah in their lamentations to this day, and made them an abiding institution in Israel; and behold they are written in the Lamentations."[2] As in Persia a yearly time of lamentation for Hossain, the grandson of Mohammed—dead now for a thousand years—is still held, all amusements being laid aside, mourning assumed, the grave visited, and orations or poems on his virtues and death delivered to numerous assemblages;[3] so, it would appear, was it for ages among the Hebrews in the case of Josiah.

Such popular veneration, growing with years, deepened the influence of the good king's life. He was remembered above all for his zeal for the Law; "his deeds, becoming one of the Hasidim,"[4] or zealots for the exact observance of the ancient sacred books of Moses. In this respect, as we have seen, he had no rival either before or after him among the kings of Judah. Nor was the immense service he rendered to the theocracy confined to his lifetime. No sooner had the kingdom and the temple perished than its profound results appeared. The down-trodden Jew, now made intensely earnest by his misfortunes, cherished the

was imagined, by the winter. In Phœnicia this god was known as Adonis, "the Lord," or under the old Babylonian name, Tammuz, for whom Ezekiel saw women sitting weeping, within the precincts of the temple itself, at Jerusalem. Ezek. viii. 14. The whole festival and lamentation are described in the essay on the Syrian goddess, ascribed to Lucian. See this vol., p. 426.

[1] Rev. xvi. 16.

[2] 2 Chron. xxxv. 25. The "Lamentations" in the Canon cannot be meant, as the death of Josiah is not spoken of in them.

[3] Rosenmüller's *A. und N. Morgenland*, vol. iii. p. 278.

[4] The word translated "goodness" in 2 Chron. xxxv. 26, was very early restricted to zealous devotion to the law. See "Chassidim," in Herzog, *R. Ency.*

recollection of such an ideal theocratic king as Josiah had been, carrying out literally, with all his authority, every minute requirement of the Law. His zeal dwelt in the heart of the nation as the pattern they should seek to realize, as soon as opportunity offered. Hope to rebuild the state on the model set by him, cheered and animated them during the Exile. His glorification of the Law gave a colour to the whole future history of the race. The unbending and intense devotion of Judaism to the rites and forms of the Pentateuch, after the Return, and the legalism which became supreme under Ezra and the Scribes, are to be traced to the influence of Josiah's example; not as the new critics would have it, to any contrivance of priests, either in Babylon or at a later date. Ezekiel's devotion to the Levitical system was a tribute to the universal reverence of the example of the king whom all so deeply lamented.[1] Judaism was thus, in the strictest sense, the homage of the nation to his memory, shewn in the highest form, that of imitation.

Josiah had reigned only thirteen years after the triumph of his great reformation; a period too short to root out the deep-seated evils of the time, or to turn the life of a whole people into a better course. His death was the ruin of the kingdom. Had the nation continued to carry out his work in his spirit, it might have revived, and, in any case, its fall would have been delayed. But the violence which had marked the religious revolution, was fatal to its permanence. The heathen party, maddened by suffering for a time the persecution they had so eagerly inflicted, under Manasseh, on the adherents of the old faith, strove to bring about a reaction in their own favour, when Josiah,

[1] See on this subject, Nöldeke, *Bib. Lex.*, vol. iii. p. 338.

the defender of the new state of things, was gone. Violence had, indeed, been characteristic of religious changes in Israel in all its past history, and it had at last rent the nation into embittered factions, filled with inextinguishable hatred towards each other. Reconciliation was no longer possible, even in the immediate prospect of common ruin. The blood shed on both sides raised a wild frenzy of feud and division. The Hasidim, or orthodox party, demanded the violent suppression of their opponents, as proscribed by the Law. The heathen faction, on the other hand, while retaining the worship of Jehovah, joined with it that of a host of foreign gods. The one party sought to carry out literally the commands of Deuteronomy,[1] putting to death all idolaters, or at least having no relations whatever with them; the other sanctioned a depraved morality, which the Law and even healthy natural instincts condemned.

The issue was, that the heathen party triumphed, and controlled each of the four kings yet to reign, different though they were in age, spirit, and temper. The religious settlement of Josiah was not overthrown, because things were too equally balanced to make this possible, without an uncertain struggle; but a moral chaos was introduced, which corrupted public life in every direction. Religion, in the true sense, appeared to be lost. Jeremiah's life was spent in bewailing the almost universal faithlessness to Jehovah. With Ezekiel, the community is no longer "the House of Israel," but "the House of Disobedience."[2] But neither appeal nor reproaches could now reform them. A virtual anarchy reigned in the land,[3] like that which had

[1] Deut. xii. 9; xvii. 5; xx. 16. See also Exod. xxiii. 31; xxxiv. 12. Num. xxi. 2; xxxiii. 52.

[2] Ezek. iii. 7; comp. Isa. xxx. 9.

[3] Ezek. xxii. 25-29.

preceded the fall of Samaria.[1] The kings were powerless to restrain the carnival of violence.[2]

In the past crisis of the nation the order of prophets played a foremost part as its faithful and wise guides and counsellors. But even this source of strength had disappeared. Its members still, indeed, formed a class high in respect and position,[3] but to a large extent it retained its standing only from the traditions of the past. Most of the order had become keen men of the world, degrading their office into a means of support. No longer preachers of righteousness, they used their privilege of addressing the people to "speak smooth things and prophesy deceits."[4] The favour and patronage of the rich and powerful were sought, by excusing their sins, and by fawning servility; and to gain power over the multitude they even stooped to adopt the frauds of heathen magic and superstition.[5] In the sinking kingdom they were compared, by Ezekiel, to foxes in a half-ruined wall; undermining it still more and hastening its utter destruction.[6]

A few prophets, however, still fought valiantly for the truth. No taint of violence weakened their appeals. They had learned to trust only to spiritual influences, and lost no opportunity of proclaiming anew the eternal laws of righteousness, and exhorting their fellow-citizens to return to Jehovah. But their words fell on deaf ears and dull hearts. They were not now the great power in the State they had been. In the past, they had guided its policy in the most critical times, and had often saved it.[7] Now, however, their

[1] Hos. vi. 9; vii. 4.
[2] Jer. xxxviii. 5, 14–27.
[3] 2 Kings xxiii. 2. 2 Chron. xxxiv. 22.
[4] Isa. xxx. 10. Jer. viii. 11; xiv. 13; xxiii. 17. Ezek. xiii. 10, 16.
[5] Ezek. xiii. 17–23.
[6] Ezek. xiii. 5.
[7] *E.g.*, in the case of Isaiah during the Assyrian invasion.

most earnest words were received with indifference. Israel was no longer such a kingdom as Moses had intended, listening reverently to its prophets as his ordained successors.[1] The few who still merited that name were disregarded. The loss to the nation was greater than the fall of the monarchy itself. It meant the fall of the State, for it was the repudiation of moral guidance or control. The priesthood could not supply the want; it was too corrupt. Literary culture was firmly rooted in the community, and concerned itself mainly with the sacred writings; but it was subdued to the colour of the times, and spent itself on rites and ceremonies, rather than on the great truths underlying them. At best, it was zealous for the letter, not the spirit of the law, and, as in every system where external observance is dignified with the name of religion, it fostered a hypocritical insincerity, fatal to spiritual life.

No better mirror of the times could be had than the story of Jeremiah—their greatest prophet. Pure and noble in every utterance, he spoke and counselled, warned and threatened, in vain. Never weary in the work of Jehovah, and braving all contradictions and trials to advance it, he at times sinks into despair at the wickedness around him, and the gloomy foreboding it gave of the near ruin of his country. Faithful to his great commission for half a century, and not only maintaining in his person the dignity of his order, but even increasing it, he had to feel that his influence declined as the years rolled on, while the indignities offered him deepened continually.[2]

The rout of Josiah's army had been so complete that Necho did not turn from his onward march to follow it up.

[1] Deut. xviii. 15. For "prophet" read "order of prophets."
[2] See Ewald, *Gesch.*, vol. iii. pp. 763–772.

His great aim was to strike a blow at the Syrian provinces of Assyria, while Cyaxares and Nabopolassar, with whom he had an understanding, attacked Nineveh itself. Striking northward, therefore, by way of Damascus, which he at once overpowered, he pressed up the broad valley between the two chains of Lebanon, and made himself master of the Assyrian province of North Syria; fixing his camp, for a time, within three months of the death of Josiah,[1] at Riblah,[2] on the direct road to the Euphrates, not far from Hamath on the Orontes.

Meanwhile, the inhabitants of Jerusalem had taken the first step towards self-protection, by electing a king. Josiah had left three sons, the children of two wives—Eliakim, the eldest, whose mother's name was Zebudah, of Rumah;[3] and Shallum and Mattaniah, the sons of Hamutal, the daughter of one Jeremiah, of Libnah.[4] He may have left the succession to the sons of the second and best beloved wife,[5] or, it may be, the choice of one of these held out the best hopes for the country; in any case, Eliakim was passed by in favour of Shallum, who was two years younger. Honoured by popular election, he assumed the crown under the name of Jehoahaz[6]—"He whom Jehovah

[1] 2 Kings xxiii. 31, 33.

[2] Riblah, the present Riblé, lay 10 to 12 hours S.S.W. of Hams (Emessa), on the river Orontes, in a great fruitful plain of the northern part of the Bekaa. It was the camping place of Nebuchadnezzar as well as of Necho (2 Kings xxv. 6, 20, 21; Jer. xxxix. 5; lii. 10), the fertility of the district supplying ample food and fodder for an army. The great caravan road from Palestine to Thapsacus and Carchemish, on the Euphrates, ran through it. Robinson, *New Bib. Researches*, pp. 708, 710, 831.

[3] The position of this place is very doubtful. It is thought to have been either the present Rameh, a village north of Nazareth, or el Ormah (Arumah, Judg. ix. 41), near Shechem. In either case it was a strange place to find a queen, when the Ten Tribes had so long been carried off.

[4] Unknown, but apparently in the lowland of Judah.

[5] Graetz. If he had, he would have acted contrary to Deut. xxi. 15, which provides that the elder son be not supplanted by the son of a wife more loved.

[6] Called Shallum in Jer. xxii. 11; in reference, Bertheau thinks, to his brief reign like that of Shallum of Samaria.

sustains;" having first been anointed, to give greater authority to his title.[1] Nothing is known of his character or policy beyond the hint that he did not imitate his father in reference to religion,[2] and the glance at his high spirit—if not rather at his lawlessness and violence—in the comparison of him by Ezekiel to "a young lion that had learned to catch his prey, to devour men."[3] But, as the prophet adds, "the heathen heard of him, and he was snared in their pit, and they led him off with a ring in his lips, to the land of Egypt."[4] A report of the action of the capital having reached Necho, at Riblah, in the north, such a shew of independent action sealed the fate of the new king. A sufficient force was sent to Jerusalem,[5] which at once yielded, and Jehoahaz was carried off to the Egyptian camp; Eliakim, his elder brother, being appointed king in his stead. It was, in some respects, a repetition of the fate of Hoshea, the last king of Samaria.[6] Passing on in the conqueror's train towards the Euphrates, or ignominiously sent to the Nile at once, Egypt was henceforth his place of permanent exile. How long he lived is not known, but he was a captive till his death. Such a fate was regarded as worse than that of his father at Megiddo. He was the first king of Judah that died in exile. "Weep not for the dead," said Jeremiah, "neither bewail him; but weep sore for him that goeth away; for he shall return no more, nor see his native country."[7] The new king ascended the throne under the

[1] After David's time, anointing was only practised in exceptional cases, to prevent a contest for the throne. Oehler, *Theol. d. A. T.*, vol. ii. p. 26.

[2] 2 Kings xxiii. 32. [3] Ezek. xix. 3.

[4] The word "chains" in Ezek. xix. 4, is the same as in Isa. xxxvii. 29, and means the ring in the nose by which wild beasts were led.

[5] Herodotus (ii. 159, iii. 5) speaks of Necho having taken Kadytis, the greatest city of Palestine, and the identification of this place with Jerusalem, by Böttcher, *Aehrenlese*, vol. ii. p. 113, seems complete.

[6] Vol. iv. p. 280. [7] Jer. xxii. 10.

name of Jehoiakim—"He whom Jehovah has set up;" having gladly consented to pay tribute to Necho, and become his pliant vassal. Marching on to the east, the Pharaoh successfully overran Syria, to the banks of the Euphrates, and Nineveh was thus stripped of all its territory between that river and Egypt. Nabopolassar, of Babylon, and Cyaxares, the Mede, were meanwhile pressing it to the uttermost, and left the Egyptian conqueror, for the time, in quiet possession of his new dominions. The siege of the great city was already at hand. Little more than two years remained till its fall. The prophecies of its doom were hastening to their fulfilment.

CHAPTER XIII.

FIRST YEARS OF JEHOIAKIM.

JEHOIAKIM, a young man of twenty-five when his reign commenced, shewed himself an unworthy son of his great father. Necho had laid a heavy yearly tribute on the little kingdom—100 talents of silver, and one talent of gold [1]—equal, nominally, to from £80,000 to £90,000,[2] but of vastly greater value in those early times than that sum would be now. Harsh and unfeeling, the new king took care to secure his throne by extorting this from his subjects; his military force being apparently used to wring payment of the taxes imposed to raise it, and a huge revenue besides.[3] No pity touched his heart; absorbing self-indulgence, pride, and despotic violence were his characteristics. Aspiring to be a great king, he lavished expense not only on royal state, but on costly buildings; adorning Jerusalem, as it afterwards seemed, before its impending ruin, as sacrifices were garlanded when about to be led to the altar. A great palace was built by forced labour,[4] with spacious halls roofed with cedar from Lebanon, lighted by many windows, and set off with vermilion.[5] Other notable buildings, also, rose in the city; nor is it without ground that he is thought

[1] The Septuagint has 100 talents of gold, but this is evidently an error.
[2] Thenius says £77,000; Keil, £90,000.
[3] So Thenius and Graetz.
[4] Jer. xxii. 13.
[5] Jer. xxii. 13, 14; perhaps also Hab. ii. 9–14.

to have finished the stronghold on Ophel, begun by Manasseh,[1] and known as "his house, in the garden of Uzzah," adjoining the fortress.[2] He affected, in truth, to imitate the greatest of his forefathers. But, unlike them, he used not only the forced toil of Canaanites; free citizens and peasants were enslaved, and worked to the death to carry out his will. "He built his city with blood, and his citadel with iniquity." Defiant in his ungodliness, to the length of contemptuously burning a sacred prophetic roll,[3] he shrank from no crime to silence the prophets. Had he not been controlled, he would have put Jeremiah to death, and one prophet at least, Urijah, of the ancient town of Kirjath-jearim, "the town in the woods," he actually slew. The martyr had fled to Egypt, but the king's father-in-law was sent off with an armed band, to bring him back, and having succeeded, he was forthwith beheaded, and his body refused burial in the tombs of the prophets; being "cast into the graves of the common people" as a last indignity.[4]

Things were every way dark for Judah. The reign of Josiah had raised hopes of a prosperous future, and the Book of the Law, so strangely recovered, had seemed to the multitude a charm to secure Divine favour. But Josiah had fallen in battle. The flower of the army had perished with him. His youngest son pined in chains in a foreign dungeon. The covenant they had made with Jehovah had brought no such magic blessing as had been superstitiously dreamed. It was easy for the powerful heathen party to represent that the nation would have fared better had it not cast away the gods of Manasseh's time.[5] "We shall burn incense," said the people, "and pour out drink offerings to

[1] 2 Kings xxi. 18. [2] Thenius. [3] Jer. xxxvi. 23.
[4] Jer. xxvi. 23. [5] Jer. xliv. 17, 18.

the queen of heaven,[1] as we have done, we, and our fathers, our kings, and our princes, in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem; for then we had plenty of victuals, and were well, and saw no evil."[2]

A reaction in favour of heathenism began, therefore, at once. Altars were built once more on every hill, and under every green tree. There were, again, as many gods in Judah as there were towns.[3] An Asherah was raised at the north gate of the temple enclosure—"the gate of the altar." In the dark chambers of the substructures of the temple area the sacred animals of Egypt were worshipped, amidst clouds of incense, and at the north gate of the temple there was a wailing place, where women sat crying aloud for the loss of the Phœnician god Tammuz, or Adonis.[4] Nor was even this the worst. In the most sacred spot of the temple itself,[5] in the inner court, between the porch of the Holy Place and the great altar standing before it, the spot where in Joel's day the priests in black robes, during the great fast, had implored with loud cries that Jehovah would spare His people, Ezekiel saw a group of men who must, from the place, have been priests, standing with their backs to the temple,[6] and their faces to the east, worshipping the rising sun.[7] Idols of gold and silver, wood and stone, were again set up in private houses; even the obscene symbols of Phœ-

[1] Graetz thinks that Neïth, the Egyptian goddess, is meant by the queen of heaven. She was doubtless called so—Brugsch, *Geog. Inschrift. Altägyp.* Denkmaler, vol. i. p. 245; but it was certainly the Assyrian queen of heaven that was worshipped in Judah. The worship of Neïth was specially seated at Sais, in the Delta.

[2] Jer. xliv. 17.

[3] Jer. xi. 13.

[4] Ezek. viii. 3, 10, 11, 14.

[5] Joel ii. 17.

[6] 2 Chron. xxix. 6.

[7] Ezek. viii. 16. Sunrise was sacred to the sun-worshippers. Herod., iii. 85. The Essenes in later times would not speak a word about ordinary matters before sunrise, but recited prayers. Jos., *Bell. Jud.*, II. viii. 5.

nician idolatry among others.[1] The Valley of Hinnom again resounded with the wails, and savage drum-beating, and dissonant trumpet blasts, of Moloch worship, and parents once more sought to propitiate the grisly idol by offering to it their eldest, often their only son.[2]

The dissolution of morals kept pace with the religious declension. Impurity; adultery; oppression of foreigners, of widows, and of orphans; venality in the judges; falsehood, dishonesty, usury; remorselessness towards helpless debtors; robbery, and murder, in all classes alike, hastened the ruin of the country.[3] Even the ties of relationship were disregarded. "Every man had to take heed of his neighbour, and suspect his brother."[4] The priesthood were largely tainted by the spirit of the time. There was no longer need to bring in foreign priests to serve the idols, and the prophets were, as a class, equally degenerate.

But while moral as well as political night was thus settling over the community at large, the sacred light of religion still lingered in a small circle—the forlorn hope of the old faith of Israel. Some of those who had done good service in the reign of Josiah had passed away, but their children had taken their places. In this band Jeremiah, who was related to its principal members, was the central figure. The nephew of Shallum—husband of the prophetess Huldah—and cousin of Hanameel, Shallum's son, he found in both the truest friendship. Baruch, his inseparable companion, was the grandson of Maaseiah; and Ahikam and Gedaliah—whose protection alone saved his life—were the son and grandson of Shaphan, the secretary of King Josiah.

[1] Ezek. xvi. 17, "images of men"—literally, "of a male."
[2] Jer. vii. 31; xix. 5. See Isa. lvii. 5.
[3] Jer. v. 7, 8; vi. 9; ix. 1–7. Ezek. xvi. 8, ff.; xxii. 25.
[4] Ezek. xxii. 7. Jer. ix. 4; xii. 6.

Other prophets, such as Habakkuk and Urijah, with Ezekiel, a few years later, nobly vindicated their office amidst the hatred and persecution it brought in such times. But no one, so far as we know, bore so dauntless and persistent a testimony against the sins of his countrymen as Jeremiah. The relapse into heathenism under Jehoiakim roused him to the utmost. Timid, shrinking, and sensitive by nature; love of his country, and enthusiasm for Jehovah, gave him a courage and constancy which no dangers appalled. He might in his bosom feel the humility of a child, and think himself unable to speak in public;[1] he might wish that his head were waters, and his eyes a fountain of tears, that he might weep day and night for the Daughter of his People.[2] He might sigh for a "lodge in the wilderness," to escape from the sin around him;[3] but all this passed away when he appeared before his fellow-citizens. In the presence of king, or prince, or priest, or populace, he was, as God had predicted,[4] defiant as a fortified town, and immovable as a pillar of iron, or walls of brass. Fearless and undismayed, he "girt up his loins, and arose and spoke"[5] to all classes and ranks, from day to day, whenever opportunity offered,[6] warning and rebuking with noble directness and plainness. Such fidelity, amidst a generation so fallen, bore its natural fruit in the hatred of those whose sins were assailed. The nobles were furious at his exposure of their lawless violence, and cold self-indulgence. The people at large resented indignantly his warnings that their superstitious trust in the temple as an inviolable safeguard from public danger, was mere self-deception;[7] that their sacrifices were not accepted by

[1] Jer. i. 6. [2] Jer. ix. 1. Jerusalem is meant. [3] Jer. ix. 2.
[4] Jer. i. 18. [5] Jer. i. 17, 18; xiii. 13. [6] Jer. xxv. 3; xxxv. 15.
[7] At Chunar, near Benares, in India, a stone is shewn on which it is believed "the Almighty is seated, personally, though invisibly, for nine hours every day. On this

God; that their glory as the chosen people would not save them; that they, the circumcised, would share the same fate for their sins, as the uncircumcised heathen; that the temple itself would be destroyed, as that of Shiloh had been; and that Jerusalem would be reduced to ruins, and they themselves led away as slaves to a foreign land. But he was hated, most of all, by the priests and prophets, as one who, while belonging to both orders, spoke ill of the members of each. Class feeling, than which nothing is more bitter, was roused, in both, to the deadliest intensity against him.[1] Absolute loneliness amidst his fellows; misappreciation of his motives; fierce accusation of sentiments which he abhorred; the consciousness that, while his heart was breaking for love of his country, he was denounced as a traitor by those who were themselves betraying the nation, darkened his life. Sad at soul, he had no desire for any of the pleasures of other men. Unlike priests or prophets as a rule, he remained unmarried,[2] and withheld himself from meetings of his fellows, whether for mourning or feasting.[3] The hand of God seemed against him all the day. He felt as if he were a mark for His arrows. He had been led into darkness, and was like one that lived in the gloomy tombs of the long dead.[4] At times it appeared as if God had deceived him,[5] and in his desolation of soul, he lamented that he had ever been born.[6] His life seemed an utter failure. His words came back to him like an empty sound. No man regarded them.

account the Sepoys think that Chunar can never be taken by an enemy, during these hours." Heber's *Journal*, vol. i. p. 409. This seems the exact counterpart of the notion cherished by the ancient Jews, from Jehovah dwelling in their midst, between the cherubim. The temple could not, they supposed, be taken, with such a guardian.

[1] Jer. xi. 19–21. [2] Jer. xvi. 2. [3] Jer. xvi. 8.
[4] Lam. iii. 2, 6, 12. [5] Jer. xx. 7. [6] Jer. xx. 14–18.

But though for the time, and indeed to the close of his life, "he was in derision all the day long, and mocked by every one," he had his reward in the veneration of later generations, and the profound influence of his word through all ages. To his contemporaries he seemed only to denounce and condemn all they most cherished, but he was, in reality, under Divine guidance, leading the way to a higher spirituality and a nobler development of religion. If he predicted that the day would come when the loss of the Ark would no longer be regretted; if he treated even the temple as a temporary glory soon to perish;[1] if he trusted so little to the official Reformation of Josiah, as to pass it over in silence; it was because he realized that the heart alone is the seat of true religion, and that the most sacred objects are only sources of evil, if they arrest the devotion that should centre on God. He was emphatically a preacher of righteousness. The newly discovered Law, in its moral precepts, was urged in all his discourses, as the Divine standard. Even before his day, lofty and spiritual conceptions of God and of human duty had been proclaimed by prophets and psalmists. It had been impressed on the nation that rites and offerings were subordinate in the eyes of God to a holy life and the incense of the heart. Joel had told his contemporaries to rend their hearts, and not their garments.[2] Hosea had declared that "God desired mercy, and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of Himself more than burnt offerings."[3] Micah had loudly insisted that what Jehovah required of man, was not thousands of rams, or ten thousands of rivers of oil, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with his God.[4]

[1] Jer. iii. 16; vii. 4.
[2] Joel ii. 13.
[3] Hos. vi. 6.
[4] Mic. vi. 6.

"Circumcise your heart," cried Jeremiah;[1] "amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the Lord your God."[2] In all this, there was only the echo of the teaching of Deuteronomy and of the Law at large—for there also "circumcision of the heart" was demanded, and its supreme love claimed for Jehovah.[3] But it was reserved for Jeremiah to foresee a day in which the Ceremonial Law would finally pass away, and a new spiritual covenant take the place of that of Moses. Under the Messiah, "Jehovah our Righteousness,"[4] "the Righteous Branch," "the King" who should "reign and prosper, and execute judgment and justice on the earth," another covenant than that of Sinai would be introduced. "God would put His law in their inward parts, and write it, not on stone, but in their hearts, and would be their God, and they should be His people."[5] With such a vision of the ultimate triumph of righteousness, Jeremiah, amidst all his sorrows, had the abiding consolation, that, little as men thought it, he was the divinely appointed herald of the true Kingdom of God among men.

The incidents recorded of Jehoiakim's reign are few, but the increased prophetic activity of Jeremiah during its course brings the people and the time very closely before us. The first of his discourses after the death of Josiah seems to be that which opens with the fourteenth chapter, and though in its present form it may comprise addresses originally independent, the prophet himself having put them together at a later period,[6] nothing could more vividly illustrate the state of things in these darkening years.

Misfortunes, it is said, never come singly. Josiah's death

[1] Jer. iv. 4; see the significance in vii. 5; ix. 24.
[2] Jer. xxvi. 13. [3] Deut. x. 12–16; xxx. 6; iv. 15; x. 12.
[4] Jer. xxiii. 6; xxxiii. 15, 16. [5] Jer. xxxi. 33. [6] Jer. xxx.

had been followed by a succession of dry seasons,[1] till the land was parched, and the sufferings of the population had become intense. The failure of the entreaties of the prophet for them, was the occasion of the present address.

"XIV. 2. Judah mourns (because of the droughts)," says he;[2] "the people of her towns[3] are sore troubled; they lie in black on the earth, (in their grief): the wailing cry of Jerusalem rises (to heaven)! 3. Her chief men send their little ones for water; they come to the cisterns and find none. They return ashamed and confounded, with their vessels empty; their head covered (in deepest sorrow).[4] 4. Because there has been no rain on the earth, and it is, as it were, dismayed; the field workers are ashamed; they cover their heads. 5. For the very hind (so tender in her care for her offspring[5]) calves in the field, and forsakes her fawn, because there is no grass, 6. and the wild asses stand on the tops of the bare hills, gasping for air with distended nostrils, like dragons[6] (for even on the height there is no breath of air, so fierce is the heat!) their (keen) eyesight fails (them) through want of any green thing (for food)!"

Moved by such wide suffering, the prophet entreats God on behalf of the nation, but his prayers are not heard.

"7. Though our iniquities witness against us, O Jehovah, yet help us for Thy name's sake (for thou art Jehovah, merciful and gracious;[7] and for thine honour before the heathen—for we are thy

[1] In Jer. xiv. 1. "dearth" should be "dearths." Drought was one of the punishments threatened by the Law, for national sin. Lev. xxvi. 19. Deut. xi. 17; xxviii. 23. It had often been threatened by the prophets. Jer. iii. 3; xii. 4; xxiii. 10. Hag. i. 10, ff.

[2] **Jer. xiv. 1–8.**

[3] Literally, "gates;" the place of public assembly is put for those who gather in it.

[4] 2 Sam. xv. 30; xix. 4, 5. The head covered as if there was no longer a desire to see or to be seen.

[5] The care of hinds for their young is often noticed by ancient writers. Aristotle tells how they bring them to a safe retreat which has only one approach; Pliny, how they teach them to flee at the appearance of danger; and Solinus, how they carefully hide them. Bochart, Part I. bk. iii. chap. 17.

[6] Hitzig thinks crocodiles, whales, or dolphins are intended by "dragons;" Ewald, any hard-breathing, panting animals, with widely opened mouths. Keil and Naegelsbach, jackals—open-mouthed.

[7] Josh. vii. 7-9. Ps. lxxix. 9; cvi. 8. Isa. xlviii. 9.

people), though our transgressions are many; we have sinned against Thee. 8. Thou Hope of Israel; his Saviour in the time of trouble, why shouldst Thou be like a stranger in the land (passing through it, as a land not his own), and like a wayfarer who pitches [1] his tent to tarry for the night (and has no interest in it)? 9. Why shouldst Thou be like a man confounded (and at a loss what to do); like a mighty man who can do nothing to help; and yet Thou, O Lord, art in our midst, and we are called by Thy name; O leave us not!"

But God answers:

"10. Thus says Jehovah to this people.[2] They have indeed loved to wander; they have not kept back their feet; and therefore Jehovah does not accept them:[3] He will remember their iniquity and visit their sins. 11. And Jehovah said to me, Pray not for this people for their good. 12. Though they fast, I will not hear their cry; though they offer up burnt sacrifices and the Minchah,[4] I will not accept them, but will consume them by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence." [5]

Jeremiah then makes a fresh appeal, and receives a second reply, which discloses the terrible fact that even among the prophets, there were very few worthy of the name.

"13. Then said I, Alas, Lord Jehovah, behold the (false) prophets say to my people (in Thy name)—'Ye shall *not* see the sword, ye will have no famine, but I (Jehovah) shall surely give you peace in this place.'

"14. Then Jehovah said to me, 'The (false) prophets prophesy lies in My name; I have neither sent them, nor commissioned them, nor spoken to them at all. They prophesy to you a pretended vision and lying divination, and the deceit of their own heart!' 15. Therefore thus say I, Jehovah, respecting the prophets that prophesy in My name, though I have not sent them, and say to you, 'Sword and famine will *not* be in this land'—these very prophets shall die by the

[1] Literally, "stretches." [2] Jer. xiv. 9-15.

[3] A quotation, to end of the verse, from Hos. viii. 13. "Accepts them not," literally, "has no pleasure in them."

[4] An offering consisting of flour, meal, or cakes, with oil and frankincense. It was burned on the altar, either alone, or with the bloody sacrifice. Lev. ii. 1-4; v. 6.

[5] See Lev. xxvi. 25, 26.

sword and famine. 16. And the[1] corpses of the people to whom they prophesy will be thrown out on the streets of Jerusalem, through famine and the sword, and no one will bury either them, their wives, their sons, or their daughters, for I will pour out (the punishment) of their wickedness upon them. 17. Say all this unto them!"

Such a reply from God fills the soul of Jeremiah with the profoundest sorrow.

"Mine eyes flow down with tears, night and day, without ceasing! For the virgin daughter[2] of my people has received a terrible blow; she is grievously hurt. 18. If I go out to the open country, there lie men slain with the sword: if I come into the city, behold there is the pestilence that comes after famine! And even the prophet and the priest wander round (begging), and know not whither to go! 19. Hast Thou, then, utterly rejected Judah? Is Thy soul tired of Zion? Why hast Thou smitten us, so that there is no healing for us? We look for good and no good comes to us; for a time of healing, and behold there is only terror! 20. We acknowledge, O Jehovah, our wickedness—the iniquity of our fathers: for we have sinned against Thee; 21. Yet, cast us not off, for Thy name's sake; do not dishonour (this city Jerusalem), the Throne of Thy glory.[3] Call to remembrance, break not Thy covenant with us! 22. Is there among the idols[4] of the nations any one that can bring (the) rain (we so much need)? Or can the skies (of themselves) give showers? Is it not Thou, our God, O Jehovah (who alone canst do this), and on whom only, therefore, we should wait; for Thou hast ordered all these things."

But, once again, Jehovah utterly rejects all entreaty on behalf of Judah.

"XV. 1. But Jehovah answered and said:[5] If (both) Moses and Samuel[6] (the greatest men of the Church) stood (pleading) before Me, My

[1] **Jer. xiv. 16-22.** [2] Jerusalem.

[3] Through having the temple.

[4] Literally, "vanities," primarily "breaths," then "emptinesses," "things of no worth."

[5] **Jer. xv. 1-8.**

[6] See Exod. xvii. 11; xxxii. 11-14. Num. xiv. 13-20. 1 Sam. vii. 9; xii. 23. Ps. xcix. 6.

soul could not be toward this people. Send them away from before My face (with their offerings and prayers), and let them leave My temple (where they have gathered to supplicate My favour).' 2. And when they say to you, 'Where shall we go?' say to them—Thus has Jehovah told me to say to you. Let him who is to die, go forth to his death! him who is to fall by the sword, to the sword! him who is to fall by famine, to famine! and him who is to die in captivity, to captivity! 3. I appoint four destroyers,[2] says Jehovah: The sword to slay, the dogs to tear (and fight over the corpse);[3] the birds of the air, and the beasts of the earth, to devour and destroy. 4. And I give them up to be ill treated[4] among all the kingdoms of the earth, because of Manasseh, the son of Hezekiah, king of Judah, for what he did in Jerusalem. 5. For who will have pity on thee, O Jerusalem; who will shew sympathy for thee; who will move a foot to ask how it fares with thee? 6. Thou hast rejected Me, says Jehovah, turning thy back to Me; and therefore I will stretch out My hand against thee, and destroy thee: I am weary of relenting. 7. I will scatter them in the gates of all the towns of the land as with a (broad) winnowing shovel (as men scatter the chaff on the open-air threshing floors); I will bereave thee of thy children; I will destroy[5] My people; they have not turned back from their evil ways! 8. Their widows will be more in number before Me (when I destroy their husbands) than the sands of the seas; I will bring on them, against the mothers[6] of the young warriors,[7] a spoiler, at noon (when they least expect him); I will cause anguish and mortal terror to fall on them suddenly. 9. She that has borne seven sons will droop, and breathe[8] out her soul (for her sons have fallen and she has no one to protect her); her sun will go down while it is yet day: she will be put to shame and confusion. As to the remnant of the people left, I will give them to the sword before their enemies, saith Jehovah."

Such an awful answer from God overpowers the prophet. To announce it will make all men his enemies. He wishes his mother had never borne him!

[1] Jer. xiv. 12. [2] Literally, "kinds." [3] Literally, "to drag around."
[4] "I will make them a horror or shuddering," Hitzig, Graf, Sachs, Naegelsbach, Fürst, Eichhorn; "a sport of the wind," Ewald; "an object of derision," De Wette. As in the text, Keil, Gesenius, Knobel, Mühlau and Volck. See Deut. xxviii. 25, where this threat is made in the same words.
[5] The verbs are all in the perfect, expressing God's purpose.
[6] Literally, "mother." [7] Literally, "the young man." [8] Jer. xv. 9-14.

"10. Woe is me, my mother,[1] that thou hast borne me, to be a man of strife and contention with all the land (by having to deliver such a terrible message)! I have neither lent money nor borrowed it,[2] yet all curse me."

But now comes the comforting reply of Jehovah.

"11. (Yet) verily, thy trouble, says Jehovah, will turn to thy good;[3] verily I will cause thy enemies[4] to come as suppliants to thee in the time of evil and of need.[5] 12. Can one break northern iron and bronze? 13. (As little canst thou hope that the power of the Chaldæan kingdom, the northern conqueror, will be broken.) Thy substance and thy treasures, O Judah, will I freely[6] give to it for booty, in all thy borders, on account of thy sins. 14. And I will make thee serve thine enemy in a land which thou knowest not; for a fire is kindled in my anger,[7] which shall burn against thee!"

The prophet, however, is oppressed by the thought of the persecution he suffers, and turns on his enemies, appealing to God for their punishment.

"15. O Jehovah, Thou knowest! Remember me and look upon me,[8] and revenge me on my persecutors. In Thy longsuffering (towards them) take me not away (let them not destroy me). Consider that it is for Thy sake I suffer reproach. 16. Thy words came to me,[9] and I, as it were, devoured them. Thy words were the joy and rejoicing of my heart, for I bear Thy name, O Jehovah of Hosts. 17. I did not sit in the assembly of the rejoicing, nor make glad with them: I sat alone (far from all pleasure), because Thy hand was upon me. For Thou hast filled me with Thy wrath. 18. Why is my suffering continual? why is my wound incurable? why will it not heal? Wilt Thou be indeed like a deceitful stream to me, like waters that pass away and leave their bed dry?"

[1] **Jer. xv. 10–18.** [2] Deut. xxiii. 19. Ps. xv. 5.

[3] This is Hitzig's rendering. Gesenius has, "I will afflict thee for thy good." So Naegelsbach. Others, "I have strengthened thee for good." Still others, "Thy losing is for good" -a slightly different reading in the Hebrew causing these variations. The sense evidently is, "In the troublous times to come thou shalt surely be delivered."

[4] Literally, "the enemy." [5] Fulfilled, chap. xxi. 1, 2; xxxvii. 3; xlii. 2.

[6] "Without price." [7] Quoted from Deut. xxxii. 22.

[8] Literally, "visit me." [9] Literally, "were found."

Jehovah answers, rebuking the prophet's impatience.

"19. Then answered Jehovah thus:[1] If thou returnest to Me (and givest up these doubts and reproaches), I will take[2] thee back (as My servant), to stand before Me, and if thou bringest forth (in thy heart) good, instead of unworthy, thoughts (of Me), thou shalt be My mouth,[3] and thy enemies will turn to thee (asking thy prayers); not thou go to them (seeking help in thy need). 20. And I will make thee a strong brazen wall to this people, so that though they fight against thee they shall not prevail. For I shall be with thee, to save thee and to deliver thee, says Jehovah. 21. And I will save thee from the hand of the wicked and deliver thee from the fist of the violent."

Similar communications were made by God to the prophet at different times. One opens by directing him how to act in his personal relations, in view of the approaching ruin of his country. He is not to marry, for the children and parents of Jerusalem are doomed to a wretched death; he is not to mourn, for God will presently punish without shewing mercy; and he is not to rejoice with his friends, for all joy will soon be taken away from the land.

"XVI. 1. The word of Jehovah came to me (another time), saying, 2. Thou shalt not take a wife, or have either sons or daughters in this place.[4] 3. For thus says Jehovah respecting the sons and the daughters who shall be born here, and respecting their mothers who bear them, and respecting their fathers that begat them in this land. 4. They shall die grievous deaths;[5] there will be no smiting of the breast or wailing for them,[6] nor shall they even be buried, but they shall be-

[1] **Jer. xv. 19–xvi. 4.** [2] Literally, "bring." [3] Exod. iv. 16.

[4] He must have been living in Jerusalem at this time.

[5] Literally, "deaths of diseases."

[6] "Fifteen to twenty women, clad in black, with a dark-coloured cloth over their heads, assemble before the door of the dead person. A hand-drum is beaten by one of them, and the others move round in a circle to the time of the beating, singing aloud the praises of the dead man or woman, and striking their hands together twenty or thirty times a minute, before their face, letting their arms forthwith fall to their full length. One or other, moreover, each moment shrieks aloud with a shrill, piercing cry. The lamentations last seven days, during which the nearest female relatives of the dead visit the grave, attended by some of the mourning women, who utter

come as dung on the face of the land. They shall be consumed by the sword and by hunger, and their corpses shall be food to the birds of the air, and the beasts of the earth.

"5. Jehovah says, further:[1] Enter not a house where they are lifting up the wail, or holding a funeral feast;[2] join not in the lament, nor shew sympathy: for I have taken away My blessing from this people, says Jehovah, My grace and My pity. 6. Both great and small[3] shall die in this land, and remain unburied, and no one will raise the wail for them,[4] or cut themselves (for them), or shave their heads for them,[5] 7. nor will they break bread to any one while he mourns, to comfort him (in his sorrow) for the dead, nor reach him the cup of consolation, even for his own father or mother.[6] 8. And do not go into the house of feasting, to sit (with the company), eating and drinking. 9. For thus has Jehovah, the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel, spoken: Behold, I will silence, in this place, before your eyes, and in your lifetime, the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride."[7]

The cause of this terrible judgment is repeated.

"10. And when thou tellest people all these words, and they say to thee: Why has Jehovah spoken all this great evil against us? and what is our sin, or our iniquity that we have committed against our God? 11. Say to them, Because your fathers have forsaken Me, and gone after other gods, and served and worshipped them, and have forsaken

these piercing shrieks from time to time, as they go through the streets to the place of burial." Rosenmüller's *A. und N. Morgenland*, vol. iv. p. 274.

[1] **Jer. xvi. 5-11.**

[2] The word for "mourning" is translated "banquet," in Amos vi. 7.

[3] Old and young.

[4] No one dared to lament those who died under the wrath of an earthly king; so, now, with those who die through the wrath of God.

[5] Two signs of mourning common among ancient nations, but prohibited to Israel. Lev. xix. 28. Deut. xiv. 1.

[6] Breaking bread and drinking the cup of consolation, refers to the practice of sending bread and wine to the relations of a dead person, to comfort them in their sorrow.

[7] "On the occasion of a marriage the women go in a procession from the house of the bridegroom to fetch the bride, who is brought amidst the joyful cries of the women, and in the company of her mother and other female relations. The procession is always by day, and generally about three in the afternoon. Verses suited to the occasion are sung as an epithalamium, by women hired for the purpose, or by female slaves; all the women raising a piercing cry of joy at the end of each verse, as a chorus. A hired band also plays before the procession, and such of the women in it as have good voices join loudly in the songs." Russell's *Aleppo*, vol. i. p. 406.

Me, and have not kept My law,[1] 12. and *you* have done worse than your fathers; for, behold, ye walk, every one after the stubbornness of your evil heart, and will not give heed to Me: 13. For this, I will hurl you out of this land, unto the land which you do not know, and your fathers knew not; there, ye may serve other gods, day and night, for I will shew you no favour!"

But if the punishment is to be terrible, the Divine mercy, still unexhausted, will ultimately vouchsafe a wondrous deliverance.

"14. Yet, behold, a time will come, says Jehovah, when they will no longer swear 'By the life of Jehovah who brought up the sons of Israel from the land of Egypt,' 15. but 'By the life of Jehovah who brought the sons of Israel from the land of the North, and from all the lands to which He had driven them.' For I will bring them back to the land which I gave to their fathers."

But though the Divine grace will be shewn in the end, the nation must, meanwhile, be carried away in successive deportations, to foreign lands.

"16. Behold, I will send for many fishers, says Jehovah, and they will fish[2] them out, and, afterwards, I will send for many hunters, and they will hunt them from every mountain, and from every hill, and from the clefts of the rocks.[3] 17. For My eyes are upon all their ways: they are not hid from Me, and their iniquity is not hid from My eyes. 18. And I will thus requite their two-fold sin[4] with a two-fold punishment (the horrors of war and the pains of captivity, before I restore them to their land). Because they defiled My land with their mock gods, foul as dead carcases,[5] and filled My inheritance with their loathsome idols."

The prophet breaks out into an expression of his conviction that the justice of God, thus shewn, will increase the Divine glory.

[1] Jeremiah takes for granted that their fathers had the law. **Jer. xvi. 12-18.**
[2] See Amos iv. 2. [3] Isa. vii. 19. [4] See Jer. ii. 13.
[5] "Carcases" may mean the sacrifices, clean or unclean, offered to idols, or the idols themselves, which, alike, polluted any one who touched them, as a dead body did. But it seems better to think of the idols as mere dead forms, in opposition to the living God.

"19. O Jehovah, my strength, and my fortress,[1] and my refuge in the day of adversity, to Thee will the nations come from the ends of the earth, and say, 'Our fathers inherited only false and worthless gods, in whom no help is to be found. 20. Shall man make to himself gods, which are yet no gods?'"

Jehovah answers:

"21. Because of this, behold, I will this time (by My awful judgments) cause men to acknowledge Me; to acknowledge My hand and My might, and that My name is Jehovah. XVII. 1. The sin of Judah is graved with an iron tool,[2] and cut with a diamond point[3] (which alone are hard enough), on the (flinty) tablet of their heart, and on the horns of their altars. 2. Their children will remember (with horror) the altars of their fathers, and their Asherahs, under the green trees, on the high hills.[4] 3. O Thou (Judah), My mountain in (the richly bedewed) field,[5] thy substance and thy treasures will I give to the spoil, thy heights (around thee) in all thy borders, because of thy sin.[6] 4. And thou, even thou, by thine own fault, wilt be torn away from thine heritage that I gave thee, and I will cause thee to serve thine enemies in the land which thou knowest not. For ye have kindled the fire of My wrath and it will burn for ever."

The verses that follow seem to have been a separate discourse, occasioned by the public and private wickedness

[1] **Jer. xvi. 19-xvii. 4.** [2] Job xix. 24.

[3] The ancients were well acquainted with the cutting powers of the diamond, and set it in iron, as is now done for the use of glaziers. *Sp. Comm.*, quoting Pliny, *Hist. Nat.*, xxxvii. 15. The Hebrew word for diamond means, primarily, a thorn, or a finger-nail. See art. "Edelsteine," *Bib. Lex.* It seems, however, as if Assyria threw light on this passage. The word for "tablet" is that which is used for the clay tablets of Nineveh, and the pen, of course, would thus be the metal style employed for impressing characters on them. "The point of a diamond" is very frequently an expression suggested by the fact that the poor made marks with their nails on these tablets, in place of signing them: the word meaning, as stated above, both nail and diamond. The tablets of Tel Amarna shew us that even before the time of Joshua clay tablets stamped with cuneiform writing were in use over all Western Asia.

[4] This difficult passage may be variously rendered. Perhaps it means, that their altars remind men of child sacrifices; the trees on the hills, of Asherahs; or, that they love their altars and their groves as passionately as they love their children

[5] Eichhorn. See Jer. xviii. 14; xxi. 13.

[6] Hitzig thinks the hill district round Jerusalem is to be given up as a *sin-offering*, to be utterly destroyed by the enemy.

around him; the harsh treatment he himself received weighing heavily on his mind.

"5. Thus says Jehovah,[1] Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his arm, and whose heart departs from Jehovah. 6. He shall be like the stunted juniper[2] in the barren desert. He will not see good when it comes, but will inhabit the parched places in the

A "Watered Garden."

wilderness; a salt and uninhabited land. 7. But blessed is the man who trusts in Jehovah, and whose confidence Jehovah is. 8. He shall be as a tree planted by the waters;[3] that stretches out its roots to the

[1] **Jer. xvii. 5-8.**

[2] Not "heath," as in A.V. There is no true heath in Palestine south of the lower Lebanon. The mistake has risen from the Arabic word 'Azar, the dwarf juniper, being similar in sound to that used in our text. Chap. xlviii. 6, where "heath" again occurs, is to be translated as above. The word means "stripped." "naked;" hence, "homeless," "lost," "destitute."

[3] The rivulets of irrigation in Eastern gardens.

stream, and does not fear when the heat comes ; but its leaves will be still green : and in the year of drought it will not be troubled, or cease to bear fruit.[1]

"9. The heart is deceitful above all things.[2] It is wofully sick.[3] Who can know it ?

"10. I, Jehovah, search the heart and try the reins, to give every man according to his way; according to the fruit of his deeds.

"11. As the partridge (is said to) sit[4] on eggs (which she has not laid), and to hatch them, (only to see the young ere long leave her,[5]) so is he who gets riches and not by right. He will leave them in the midst of his days,[6] and at his end will be a fool."

These reflections sustain the prophet in his personal troubles, and turning his thoughts to Jehovah, his strength and refuge, he addresses the temple as His dwelling.

"12. Thou Throne of Glory, exalted from of old; thou place of Our Sanctuary! 13. Jehovah, Thou hope of Israel, all that forsake Thee shall be put to shame! They that turn from Thee shall be written in the dust[7] (not in the rock): because they have forsaken Jehovah, the fountain of living waters.[8]

"14. Heal me! Jehovah, and I shall be healed; help me, and I shall be helped, for Thou art my praise! 15. Behold, they say to me, 'Where is the word of Jehovah? Is it still to be fulfilled?' 16. I have never drawn back from being a leader,[9] following Thee, nor have I wished for the coming of the woful day (I had to predict); Thou knowest. That which came out of my lips lay always open before Thee. 17. Be not a terror to me; Thou art my refuge in the day of evil.

[1] The same image as in Ps. i.

[2] Jer. xvii. 9–18.

[3] The word is translated in chap. xv. 18 ; xxx. 12, "incurable."

[4] Or, heaps up (under it).

[5] This popular fancy of Jeremiah's day is illustrated by Eichhorn from a hen hatching ducks' eggs. The ducklings follow their own nature and very soon leave the foster mother. Another translation is: "Gathereth young which he has not brought forth, so is he . . . he shall," but it seems inferior to that which I have given, from Eichhorn and others.

[6] Eichhorn reads, "They will leave him," etc. So the Septuagint.

[7] In India, children at school are often made to write on a smooth surface of sand strewn on the ground for the purpose, the writing being afterwards effaced to renew the smoothness.

[8] Jer. ii. 13 ; ix. 1.

[9] Literally, "shepherd."

18. Let my persecutors be put to shame, but let not me be put to shame. Let them be made afraid, but let not me be made afraid. Bring upon them the day of evil, and smite them with an utter destruction." [1]

Such were some of the utterances of Jeremiah in the dark months after Josiah's death. God was invisible then as now; secondary causes as numerous and active. The mass of men had as little faith in the unseen as they have to-day; accounting for all things as glibly, without reference to a higher power, as any modern philosopher. Yet here stands a man to whom God is the one great reality in Whom all things, literally, live and have their being, the true King of the world and of each man in it. His law is the one rule of life, transgression of which must be denounced, and obedience to which, by a nation or individual, is imperative, under the most terrible penalties! How comes it that such ancient faith has so wholly faded from among Christian mankind? Where shall we to-day look for a preacher, fearless, plain-spoken, earnest, sincere, like Jeremiah? If he were among us, would he fare much better than the prophet?

[1] Literally, "double." See Jer. xvi. 18.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE PROPHET FACE TO FACE WITH HIS AGE.

EXCEPTING the few verses in the historical books of Scripture, the prophecies of Jeremiah are the only source of our knowledge of the reign of Jehoiakim. Fortunately, however, the discourses of the prophet throw light incidentally on many characteristics of the times, while episodes of personal and public history are introduced, which bring the great preacher and his contemporaries for the moment vividly before us.

One of the first marks of growing religious laxity, after the death of Josiah, had been seen in the neglect of the Sabbath, contrary to the express command of the Law, which the nation had so recently pledged itself to observe. Alike in Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy,[1] the honouring of that day by a total cessation from work, is commanded as a fundamental duty; to mark the wide difference between Israel and other nations, to foster religious reverence, and to give a religious tone to public and private life. Such a positive requirement supplied a simple and ready test of the spiritual condition of the community; for the bias towards obedience or disobedience to the Divine will was decisively marked by its observance or neglect. In his earlier discourses the prophet had exposed the sins of classes and individuals unsparingly, and announced the threatenings of the

[1] Exod. xx. 8–11; xxxi. 13, 14. Lev. xix. 3, 30; xxvi. 2. Deut. v. 12–15.

Divine indignation. Could this mode of address be to blame for the miscarriage of his ministry? Had he repelled rather than encouraged? He would at least try what effect it would have, simply to exhort to a right course; to remind his fellow-citizens of the eternal distinction between right and wrong; withholding, meanwhile, all threatenings. But the experiment met with no success. Instead of winning over his hearers, he had to bear a fresh series of persecutions[1] so bitter, that endurance once more gave way, and his human weakness broke out in imprecations against his enemies;[2] foes alike of God and of His prophet.

Yet, however imperilled, he could not be silent. Perhaps another variation in his mode of address might arrest attention and do good. He would shew by a simple emblematic act how the fate of the nation was in the hands of God,[3] and leave the lesson to quiet reflection. But this course also, as we shall see, was a failure. His fellow-citizens "hardened their necks, that they might not hear his voice,"[4] and nothing, therefore, was left but to utter once more the terrible judgments impending over such inveterate stubbornness.

The short discourse respecting the Sabbath, though repeated at the town gates,[5] was first delivered, apparently, at the great central entrance to the outer court of the temple, used by all classes except the priests and Levites, who appear to have had doors at the sides for themselves. The Sabbath in its strict legal conception had already ceased to be kept. Instead of a day of rest, it was one of the busiest days of the week. Ordinary work being suspended, the population occupied itself with marketing, and disturbed the sacred house by the clamour and bustle of a fair. If we may judge

[1] Jer. xviii. 18, 20. [2] Jer. xviii. 21, 22. [3] Jer. xviii.
[4] Jer. xviii. 15. [5] Jer. xvii. 19.

from the state of things at a later time, under Nehemiah, Jerusalem had almost less quiet on the seventh day than on any other. The country people brought "wares and victuals,"[1] "wine, grapes, figs," and all kinds of produce, into the city, for sale. A local colony of Phœnician traders, having, as heathens, no scruple about the day, added to the disorder and unseemliness, by exposing for sale dried fish from the sea, and from the Lake of Galilee, while the townsmen, generally, spread out all kinds of wares[2] in their booths, for the peasantry and the citizens. Nor was this desecration of the Sabbath limited to Jerusalem. It prevailed over the country at large. The wine-presses were trodden on the sacred day, the sheaves of the harvest carried on asses and camels to the threshing floors, and, doubtless, all other rural occupations pursued as through the week. Against such a clamant violation of the Law which the nation had so recently pledged itself before God to honour, Jeremiah remonstrated earnestly.

"XVII. 21. Thus says Jehovah,[4] cried he, Take heed in your hearts,[5] and neither bear any burden on the sabbath day, nor bring one in through the gates of Jerusalem, 22. nor carry one out of your houses on the sabbath day, nor do any work, but hallow the sabbath day, as I commanded your fathers.[6] 23. But *they* did not obey, but stiffened their neck (in haughty defiance) and would not hearken or receive instruction. 24. Yet, if ye honestly listen to Me, says Jehovah, to bring no burden through the gates of the city on the sabbath day, but hallow it, by doing no work on it, 25. kings and princes, sitting on the throne of David, riding in chariots or on horses, with their great men, the men of Judah, and the citizens of Jerusalem, shall enter through the gates of this city, and it will remain for ever. 26. And people will come from the cities of Judah and the neighbourhood of

[1] Neh. x. 31. [2] Literally, "burdens." Neh. xiii. 15, 16.
[3] Jer. xvii. 22. [4] **Jer. xvii. 21-26.** [5] Literally, "souls."
[6] If, as the new critics say, Jeremiah learned the Sabbath Law from Deuteronomy, he believed it to be an ancient book, known to their fathers.

Jerusalem, and from the land of Benjamin, and from the slopes of the Shephelah [1] (on the west), and from the mountains (to the east), and from the Negeb [2] (on the south), bringing whole burnt offerings, and ordinary sacrifices, and flour and oil offerings, and incense and thanksgivings [3] to the House of Jehovah.

"27. But if ye will not hearken to Me,[4] to hallow the sabbath day, and not to bear a burden as ye enter through the gates of Jerusalem on the sabbath day, I will kindle a fire in its gates,[5] and it shall consume the palaces of Jerusalem, and shall not be quenched."

This kindly warning, however, was as fruitless as the other appeals of the prophet. Another form of address still remained. He would try what effect a striking symbolical act on his part would have; one specially fitted to disarm hostility, by its shewing the possibility of the judgment of God being even yet averted by a timely repentance.

"XVIII. 1. The word of Jehovah, he began,[6] came to me, saying: 2. Rise, and go down to the pottery (in the valley under the town), and I will there make a communication to you. 3. And I went down to the pottery, and behold, the potter was at work on his two wheels.[6] 4. But when the vessel he was making of clay was spoiled in his hand,

[1] Vol. iii. p. 5.

[2] Vol. ii. 362. This passage shews the country still held by Judah: "the land of Benjamin" to the north; the Shephelah—or slopes of the western hills—the mountains reaching from the Shephelah to the Dead Sea; and the Negeb, or uplands of the south.

[3] Tōdāh. This is the word rendered "sacrifice of praise" in our version. It is frequently translated simply as "giving thanks," Neh. xii. 27, 31, 38, 40. "Thanksgiving," Ps. xxvi. 7; l. 14; lxix. 30. "Praise," xlii. 4; l. 23; lvi. 12.

[4] **Jer. xvii. 27-xviii. 4.**

[5] I will let loose an enemy on it, who shall do so.

[6] On the potter's wheel, etc., see *Kritiken und Studien*, 1834, pp. 81, ff.; 626, ff.; 641, ff. At a village on the Dardanelles I saw a potter at work. He sat on a raised bench behind his frame, and turned his "wheels" with his foot, by a footboard. A pan of water and a heap of prepared clay were on the frame before him. Taking a lump of the clay and laying it on the wheel, which revolved horizontally, he rounded it into a low cone, dipping his hand in the water as he did so, to moisten its outside. Then thrusting his thumb into the top of the cone, the wheel all the time going round, he made a hole which increased with every revolution. Meanwhile his wet hands pressed against the exterior, shaped the vessel as he thought fit. Of the "two wheels" in the text, one was simply to communicate motion, from the treadle, to the other placed above it.

he made another vessel of it, such as he thought fit. 5. And (as I was looking,)[1] the word of Jehovah came to me, saying: 6. Cannot I do with you, O House of Israel, as this potter (does with the clay)? says Jehovah. Behold, as the clay is in the hand of the potter (to do what he pleases with it), so you are in My hand, O House of Israel! 7. At one time I speak respecting a nation or kingdom, to pluck it up, to pull it down and to destroy it. 8. But if that nation against which I have spoken, turn from its wickedness, I repent of the evil I had purposed to do to it. 9. At another time I speak respecting a nation or kingdom, to build it up and to plant it. 10. But if it do evil in My sight, not listening to My voice, then I repent of the good I had promised to shew it.

"11. Speak, now, to the men of Judah and to the citizens of Jerusalem, and say: Thus says Jehovah: Behold, I am framing evil against you, and meditating a design against you. Return ye, every one, from his evil course, and reform your ways and your deeds."

The prophet, however, hesitates to speak to the people any more; they will only turn a deaf ear to him once more.

"12. But they keep on saying, 'It is all useless your speaking; we will follow our own thoughts, and will each carry out the stubbornness of his evil heart.'"

God therefore replies—

"13. Thus says Jehovah: Ask even the heathen! Who has heard such things? The Virgin of Israel has done a deed that makes one shudder! 14. Does the snow of Lebanon[2] fail from the rocks of the mountains?[3] Or do the cold flowing waters, that come from distant and (unknown) sources, dry up? 15. (Nature is constant,) yet My people have forgotten Me. They burn incense to their no-gods, but *they* have made them stumble in their ways—the (firm and smooth) paths of old times—and have led them into (rough) tracks, not cast up or made. 16. Thus my people will make their land an astonishment, a perpetual scoffing, every one that passes through it will be astonished, and will shake his head (in amazement)! 17. I will scatter them for this before their enemy, as with a (fierce) storm[4] from the

[1] **Jer. xviii. 5–17.**

[2] Lebanon = "the white," from the limestone rock, or from the snow.

[3] Literally, "of the field" = open country.

[4] **Jer. xiii. 24.** The burning sirocco, or east wind, is meant.

east. I will turn My back to them, not My face, in the day of their calamity."

But this address only increased the fury of the prophet's enemies.

"18. 'Come,'[1] said they to the crowd, 'let us lay a plot against Jeremiah ; for knowledge of the Law[2] shall *not* be lost from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor revelation of God's word from the prophet, (although Jeremiah perish). Come, let us smite him with the tongue, (by reporting his words to the king, and bearing false witness against him,) and let us pay no attention to any of his words.'"

Such determined malignity roused the indignation of the prophet, and for the moment overpowered his gentler nature. A son of the Old Testament, not of the New, he met their hatred with the fierce imprecations familiar to Orientals in all ages, and yet to be read in some of the Psalms.

"19. Give heed to me, O Jehovah, and hearken to the voice of my adversaries ! 20. Shall evil be repaid (me) for (the) good (I have sought them),[3] that they dig a pit for my life ? Think how I stood before Thee to seek good for them; to turn away Thy wrath from them. 21. Therefore, give Thou their sons to hunger;[4] deliver them to the sword ! Let their wives be made childless and widows ! Let their strong men be given over to death, their young men be smitten

[1] Jer. xviii. 18-21.

[2] The multitude claim for the priests the knowledge of the Law, strictly so called, which was committed to their keeping and study, though, as in other Churches besides the Jewish, they were far enough, at some periods, from being worthy of their office.

[3] Jer. xiv. 7, 21.

[4] Orientals have in all ages been given to imprecation. The following is part of the curses pronounced against Russian Jews who venture in the smallest particular to disobey the commands of their Rabbis. It is quoted from a recent number of the *Century Magazine:* "May the Lord's calamity hasten to overtake him ; God the Creator break him, bend him ! May fiends encounter him ! May he be accursed wherever he stands ! May the Lord visit him with consumption, brain fever, inflammation, insanity, ulcers, and jaundice ! May he be as chaff which the wind drives before it, and may the Angel of God pursue him ! May he encounter direst despair, and may he fall into the net spread for his feet by God ! He shall be clothed with curses as with a garment. And God shall give no forgiveness to this man, but pour His wrath and His vengeance upon him ; and all the curses shall enter into him that are written in the Law."

in battle by the sword! 22. Let a cry come from their houses,[1] when Thou bringest on them a band of fighting men suddenly ; for they have dug a pit to take me, and have laid snares for my feet. 23. But Thou, Jehovah, knowest all their deadly plot against me! Do not forgive their iniquity, or blot out their sin from Thy sight ! Let them be overthrown before Thee ! In the time of Thine anger deal Thou with them ! "

The obduracy and malignity of Judah had been borne with till now, but the cup of its sin was at last full. The irrevocable sentence of doom could no longer be delayed. A Divine intimation, conveyed to Jeremiah we know not how, directed him, therefore, to buy one of the ordinary small, narrow-mouthed bottles, of common coarse red earthenware, still used by the peasants to hold their drinking water. He was then to summon the elders of the people and of the priests, as leading men of the community, and go with them to the Potsherd Gate, at the south-west corner of the city, over the Valley of Hinnom ; a spot still marked by a vast accumulation of fragments of ancient earthenware. There he was to repeat a message God had charged him to deliver to them, and, as he did so, he was to throw down the bottle at their feet, and shiver it to pieces, as a significant enforcement of his words. Jerusalem was finally given over to destruction. It would be destroyed as utterly as the jar, shattered to fragments in their sight. Nor was this the only lesson. To break a bottle or jar beside any one, is still the familiar expression, in Palestine, of strong detestation of the person thus marked, and, as it were, an imprecation on him and his of utter and final destruction. The burden which the prophet was commissioned to utter was as follows :

" XIX. 3. Hear the words of Jehovah, ye kings of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem ! Thus says Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel :

[1] Jer. xviii. 22-xix. 3.

Behold, I will bring evil on this place, which will make the ears of every one who hears of it tingle ! 4. Because they have forsaken Me, and treated this place as if it were profane ground,[1] and have burned incense in it to other gods, which neither they, nor their fathers, nor the kings of Judah have known : (because of this,) and (also because they) have filled this place with the blood of innocent children, 5. and built the high places of Baal, to burn their sons in the fire as offerings to Baal ; which I neither commanded, nor have spoken of, and which never even came into My mind : 6. therefore, behold the days come, says Jehovah, that this place shall no longer be called the Tophet, or the Valley of Ben Hinnom, but the Valley of Slaughter.[2] 7. And I will empty out (on the dust) the counsels of Judah and Jerusalem in this place (as this water is now poured from this vessel)."

Here, the prophet probably enforced his words, by emptying the water-bottle on the ground as he uttered them.

"And I will cause them to fall by the sword before their enemies, and by the hands of those that seek their lives, and I will give their corpses for meat to the birds of the heavens, and the beasts of the earth ; 8. and I will make this city an astonishment and a scoffing ; every one that passes through it will be astonished and hiss at its misfortunes.[3] 9. And I will make them eat the flesh of their sons and of their daughters ;[4] every one, indeed, will eat the flesh of his friend, in the siege and straitness with which their enemies, and those that seek their lives, will hem them in. 10. Then thou shalt break the bottle, in the sight of the men that go with thee."

At this point the prophet, as directed, suddenly dashed to the ground the water-bottle in his hand, and, as it flew into a thousand pieces, went on—

"11. Even so, says Jehovah of hosts, will I shatter this people and this city, as this bottle, which cannot be made whole again, has been shattered. And they will bury their dead (even) in (a polluted spot like) Tophet, because no room is left elsewhere. 12. Thus will I do to this place, says Jehovah, and to its inhabitants, and make this place like (the foul) Tophet (close to us here in this valley). 13. And the houses of

[1] Literally, "foreign, or strange." **Jer. xix. 4–13.**
[2] These verses are a repetition of chap. vii. 31, 32.
[3] Literally, "its blows."
[4] Deut. xxviii. 53–57. Lev. xxvi. 29. Lam. iv. 10.

Jerusalem and of the kings of Judah will be like the place of the unclean Tophet—(the abhorrence)—yea, all the houses will be polluted on whose roofs they have burnt incense to the Host of Heaven, and poured out drink offerings to other gods."

If a dervish were to tell a crowd at Mecca that, as a punishment for the wickedness of the inhabitants, the city would be taken by the infidel, and the Great Mosque, the centre of the Mohammedan world—too holy for any Jew or Christian even to approach—the El Haram, the Inviolable, the Sacred—be turned into a slaughter-house for pigs, the execration of the Mussulman faith—it would be something similar to Jeremiah's declaration that Jerusalem and its Temple, the object of a superstitious reverence, would be trampled under foot by the Chaldæan, and turned into a Tophet, the scene of human sacrifice—a spot fit only to be spat upon and abhorred, the very name of which was used as an equivalent for all that was vilest and most despised.[1] Popular indignation would inevitably be roused in the bigoted population of the centre of Islam in the one case, and was set ablaze in that of the Holy City in the other.

Truths so unpalatable would have been hard to bear under any circumstances; but Jeremiah was not contented with uttering them only to his first small audience. Moving from the Potsherd Gate and the neighbourhood of Tophet, he made his way to the forecourt of the temple,[2] in which the people at the moment were gathered; perhaps especially to invoke the protection and favour of Jehovah. Taking his stand among them, it may be on the steps leading up to the

[1] In Job xxx. 10, the second clause should be read: "And I am become as one in whose face men spit" literally, "a Tophet." Our translators have used the word "Tophet" as equivalent to a drum, the Hebrew for which is very like it.

[2] Jer. xix. 14; xx. 1.

inner court, he startled the worshippers by proclaiming in the name of Jehovah of Hosts, the God of Israel, amidst a storm of loud taunts and mockeries,[1] that He was about to bring on Jerusalem, and every town of the kingdom,[2] all the evil He had spoken against it, because they had hardened their necks,[3] that they might not hear the Divine words. In his address at the Potsherd Gate he had denounced only Jerusalem. Now, the whole country was included in the approaching doom. Only a sentence of this second address is given, but it was evidently even fuller and more explicit than that just delivered at the city gate. To invade the very temple itself, thus, with a proclamation of its speedy ruin and profanation, seemed a defiance of its authorities, and an intolerable outrage on public feeling. Such a daring speaker, so regardless of all propriety, so unabashed in his bearing towards constituted dignities, so free in his charges against every one, could no longer be endured. He had only spoken the words put in his mouth by God ; but then, as now, with very rare exceptions, to be a popular preacher meant to avoid offending the hearers and keep one's self-interest well in mind. For sermons immeasurably less severe than the addresses of Jeremiah, Latimer, the prophet-preacher of the Reformation, is still denounced by the parasites of Rome, three centuries after his martyrdom, as vulgar and personal. Human nature has been always the same. A man so offensive as to speak the truth, must be taught manners. Instead of muffling the drum ecclesiastic to spare polite ears, he had beaten it as if he meant that all should hear. Instead of confining himself to generalities, he had brought the truth home. He had used his office seriously, not as a shrewd

[1] See verses 7, 8.
[2] Literally, "her towns ;" that is, towns subject to Jerusalem.
[3] — Shewn their stubbornness and obstinacy.

man of the world.[1] Among his audience had been Pashur, the commandant[2] of the temple—a priest by birth,[3] and also a nominal member of the order of prophets—a position he used to "prophesy lies."[4] He, at least, would no longer tolerate this hitherto privileged railer at priests, temple, prophets, king, nobles, and people. Ordering the temple police to seize Jeremiah, the prophet was forthwith ignominiously thrown down and bastinadoed,[5] and then hurried, bruised and bleeding, to the stocks, which stood in the temple market at the Benjamin Gate, between the upper and lower courts, on the north side.[6] Into these his head, hands, and feet were thrust, and he was left thus bent together,[7] to spend the night as best he could, exposed to the jeers of the crowd, till the temple closed, and to the cold dews of later hours.

But Pashur soon had cause to regret his violence. Earnest conviction is not to be silenced by force. Jeremiah had urged what every man's conscience, on reflection, felt was right. He had only denounced what must bring the ruin he

[1] In an American paper I find an admirable satire on the conventional sermon of our day. A negro preacher tells his temporary substitute, that he must "see that the people get religion, lay hold on salvation, an' all dat sort of t'ing; but, mind, don't you tell dem not to steal de turkeys! My congregation won't stand dat kind o' talk!"

[2] In the A. V. "chief governor." "Commandant, or chief overseer, or inspector," Mühlau and Volck, Hitzig, Ewald, Keil, De Wette, Sachs, Eichhorn.

[3] Immer, his father—probably the same as Amaziah (Neh. x. 3; xii. 2)—was the head of the 16th course of priests, 1 Chron. xxiv. 14. He was, in fact, a dignitary of the Church; something like an English dean, for position.

[4] Jer. xx. 6.

[5] Jer. xx. 2. The Egyptian paintings shew that the victim was thrown on his face and held by the head and feet, while being beaten.

[6] Keil.

[7] The word for stocks, *Haphach*, to bend. There was a "house of the stocks" (2 Chron. xvi. 10), "prison-house" in A. V., "jail." Perhaps there was a prison in the temple, with a room in it for the stocks, like the torture-room of old dungeons. The word used here occurs in 2 Chron. xvi. 10; Jer. xx. 2, 3; xxix. 26. Another word, "*Sad*," means stocks into which the legs alone were inserted. It occurs in Job xiii. 27; xxxiii. 11.

predicted. He had truth on his side, and he was faithful to it, and therefore invincible. If he had spoken out, the times needed his doing so. To proclaim truth, however unpleasant, was his sacred duty as a prophet. A night's sleep brought Pashur to a calmer mood, and Jeremiah was set free in the morning; his enemies perhaps thinking he had learned a lesson to keep his tongue in order.

Never were men more in error. Making his way straight to the high official himself,[1] his victim terrified him by announcing that Jehovah had changed his name from Pashur to "Terror on every side."

"XX. 4. For thus saith Jehovah [continued the prophet], I, Jehovah, will make you a terror to yourself and to all your friends. And they will fall by the sword of their enemies, and your eyes will see it. And I will give all Judah into the hands of the king of Babylon, and he shall carry them captive to Babylon, and slay them with the sword. 5. Still more, I will deliver all the riches[2] of this city, and all its property, and all its glory, and all the treasures of the kings of Judah, into the hand of their enemies, who shall plunder them, and seize them, and carry them off to Babylon."

Then, addressing Pashur directly, before his astonished attendants and the people round, he added—

"6. And you, Pashur, and all that dwell in your house will be dragged off into captivity, and you will come to Babylon, and you will die and be buried there, you and all your partisans,[3] to whom you have prophesied lies."[4]

The second offence was worse than the first; but Pashur dared not arrest him again, and allowed him quietly to with-

[1] **Jer. xx. 3-6.** [2] Literally, "stores." [3] Literally, "friends."

[4] Pashur was to be carried to Babylon and to die there, but not by violence. In fact, his house was one of the most numerous at the close of the Captivity. Ezra ii. 37, 38. Yet he must have suffered an agony of remorse, at the ruin his policy had brought on his country. He had urged an alliance with Egypt, in opposition to the advice of Jeremiah, and had even gone the length of acting the prophet to support his counsels.

draw. The excitement was no sooner past, however, than there came a reaction on the sufferer. The sensitive nature that had been so roused, now for a time yielded to the deepest dejection, and in this frame he gave way to an uncontrollable outburst of passionate grief.

"XX. 14. Cursed be the day,"[1] cries he, when he had reached the privacy of his lonely chamber—'cursed be the day on which I was born! Let not the day when my mother bore me be blessed! 15. Cursed be the man who brought tidings to my father, saying, 'A man child is born to thee,' making him very glad![2] 16. Let that man be like the cities which Jehovah overthrew without pity! Let him hear the cry (of the attacked) in early morning, and the shouting (of attackers) at noontide, 17. because he did not kill me when I was born, so that my mother might have been my grave, and I had never seen life. 18. Why did I come forth from the womb that my days might be spent in shame?"

But this gloom presently passes away, and he betakes himself, as was his wont, to Jehovah, his stronghold in the time of trouble.[3]

"7. O Jehovah[4] [he breaks forth]. Thou didst lead me to speak, and I have spoken. Thou (hast taken hold of me, and) hast[5] overpowered me, and made me speak. (But because I do so,) I am daily a derision: every one mocks me.[6] 8. For every time I (speak I have to utter loud

[1] **Jer. xx. 14-18.**

[2] The servant who announces the birth of a son to his master is richly rewarded, but every one hesitates to tell the birth of a daughter.

[3] I have, with Ewald, transferred verses 14–18, as they appear to come in most appropriately at this place.

[4] **Jer. xx. 7-8.**

[5] This verse shews that the prophetic impulse was irresistible; that the prophet could not keep back from speaking, whatever might be the result to himself. See Amos iii. 8. "The Lord God has spoken, who can but prophesy." See also Jer. xx. 9.

[6] Compare the words of that great prophet and preacher of the 15th century, Savonarola. "Thy sins, O Florence, are the cause of these stripes (the public misfortunes of the state). And now, repent, give alms, offer prayers, become united. O people, I have been a father to thee. I have wearied myself all the days of my life, to make known to thee the truths of the faith and of holy living, *and I have had nothing but tribulations, derision, and reproach.*" Clark's *Savonarola*, p. 169. So fares it with the true prophet in all ages. A bad sign for us clergy of to-day!

complaints,[1] and) cry out against violence and robbery. The word of Jehovah has only brought down on me reproach and derision the whole day long. 9. (So deeply have I felt this, that) I said (to myself),[2] 'I will no longer make mention of Him, or speak in His name.' But I felt as if there were a burning fire in me, shut up in my bones, and I was worn out with holding back, and could refrain no longer. 10. For I heard the slanderous talk of many: 'Terror,' said they, 'presses him on every side.[3] Report him to the authorities.' 'We will report him.' My very acquaintances,[4] my familiar companions,[5] say, 'Perhaps we can draw him out (and turn his words against him), so that we may get the better of him, and take our revenge on him.'

"11. But Jehovah stands by me as a mighty champion, and therefore my persecutors still stumble and cannot overcome me; they will be put to utter shame and everlasting reproach which shall not be forgotten. 12. But, O Jehovah of hosts, who tryest the righteous, and lookest into the reins and heart, let me see Thy vengeance on them, for I have committed my cause to Thee. 13. Sing to Jehovah, praise ye Jehovah, for He delivers the soul of the helpless[6] from the hand of evil-doers."

[1] The loud cry of one in pain is primarily meant. [2] Jer. xx. 9-12.

[3] These words are those given as a name to Pashur, "Magor Missabib," as if they had told the prophet that "terror was round *himself*, not round Pashur."

[4] Literally, "men of my peace," who greet me with the ordinary salutation, "Peace be with you!"

[5] Literally, "the keepers of my side," who do not leave my side.

[6] The word in the Hebrew is Ebiōn, which comes from a root meaning *to want, to desire*. Hence it primarily means the poor or needy; then, distressed, wretched, afflicted. It refers specially to one who, while he suffers wrong, has a true religious humility, and in this sense is used along with the "*righteous*," Amos ii. 6. The Ebionites used it as the name of their sect, claiming to be the "poor in spirit, of whom is the kingdom of heaven," Matt. v. 3. It is twenty-three times translated *poor* in the Old Testament, thirty-three times *needy*, and once, 1 Sam. ii. 8, *beggar*. In the great majority of cases there is the accessory idea of godliness. So truly have the poor, in all ages, had the honour of giving a name to the people of God.

CHAPTER XV.

GROWING DARKNESS, RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL.

THE opening years of Jehoiakim's reign were the most active of Jeremiah's public life. Affected intensely by the collapse of Josiah's religious policy, and the headlong rashness with which the heathen party were dragging the king and the nation to their ruin, he took every opportunity of seeking to bring his fellow-countrymen to reason, and, if possible, of persuading them to a worthier course.

Hitherto all his efforts had been in vain; but he could not quietly let his nation perish, whatever might be their hostility to his message. It was growing constantly clearer, however, that nothing could save them. The commandant of the temple had already put him in the stocks, after having bastinadoed him, but no personal indignity or suffering could keep him back from still another attempt to arrest public attention. He once more took his place in the spacious eastern forecourt or precinct[1] of the temple, before a vast multitude, from Jerusalem and all the cities of Judah,[2] gathered, perhaps, at the time of one of the great feasts, and in the presence of a body of priests and prophets,[3] who had, it may be, assembled specially to hear him. He had received a command from God not to keep back a single word of His Divine message, in case they might possibly listen and turn from their evil ways, so that Jehovah might

[1] Hitzig. [2] Jer. xxvi. 2, 3. [3] Jer. xx. 8.

"repent of the evil He had purposed to do them." A brief summary of his appeal is given in the twenty-sixth chapter; but, if we may judge from the full record of a very similar address delivered at another time,[1] his present one embodied the essence of all his teaching, delivered in alternate strains of fierce accusation, biting irony, overpowering grief, and passionate lamentation.[2] Nothing would save them but sincere moral reform. Their continuance in the land depended on their amending their ways and their doings. It was no use for them to trust to any fancied relations to Jehovah, as His people, or to the sacred rites and institutions of their religion. If they would not perish, they must live pure and godly lives, banishing wrong and violence from their midst, and illustrating sincere devotion to Jehovah by habitual obedience to His holy law. Otherwise, neither the Mosaic ritual, nor their being the chosen people, nor even the presence of the temple of Solomon in their midst, would prevent their ruin. Round this sacred fabric their fondest and proudest superstitions gathered. They took for granted that no evil could befall them while it stood, and that it would stand for ever. To hint at its possible destruction was to wound them in their tenderest sensibilities. As in the days of Christ and the Apostles,[3] to say a word against it was akin to blasphemy; for was it not the house of Jehovah, and would He not defend His own dwelling place? To speak of its fall was a sin that demanded death. Nothing daunted, however, Jeremiah went on to repeat what he had said already, at an earlier time.

"XXVI. 4. Thus saith the Lord,[4] [cried he, winding up his address], If ye will not hearken to Me, to walk in my Law, which I have set

[1] Jer. vii.–x.
[2] Stanley's *Jewish Church*, vol. ii. p. 449.
[3] Matt. xxvi. 61. Acts vi. 14.
[4] Jer. xxvi. 4.

before you, 5. and to listen to the words of My servants,[1] the prophets, whom I send to you, earnestly and unceasingly, though you have not listened to them (in the past). 6. then, I will make this house like Shiloh, and this city a curse,[2] among all the nations of the earth!"

Shiloh lay about thirty miles straight north of Jerusalem; and though once the national sanctuary, famous from the memories of Eli and of the great prophet Samuel, had been in ruins for five hundred years.[3] To predict a similar fate for the venerated building in whose courts they stood, was more than the priests and prophets, or the crowd, could endure. Closing, with a great uproar, round the preacher, as their descendants did round Paul, on nearly the same spot, six hundred years later,[4] they seized him, amidst loud cries that he should die, for having predicted, in the name of Jehovah, the destruction of their temple and city.

Fortunately for Jeremiah, news of the tumult was carried at once[5] to the palace; if, indeed, the sound did not itself spread the alarm. In any case, it reached the ears of some "princes" or "nobles" who were, at the moment, assembled in the royal building, or perhaps, in these oligarchical times, had their residence there. As deputies of the king, they were the high judges[6] on all causes, and, as such, instantly hurried over to the temple, and took their seats as a court, in the inner division of the temple space—the portion set apart for the men—before a gate built by King Jotham, the son of Uzziah, a hundred and fifty years before, and known as "the higher gate," or the "gate of Jehovah." Their arrival was providential, for, as has often happened since, the calm impartiality of the civil power was needed

[1] **Jer. xxvi. 5-6.**
[2] It would be pointed out as the object of a Divine curse. Deut. xxviii. 37.
[3] Vol. iii. p. 39–48. [4] Acts xxi. 30. [5] Jer. xxvi. 10-15.
[6] The judges were chosen from the highest ranks. Keil's *Archäol.*, p. 704.

to check the fury of religious violence and deliver its intended victim.

The priests and prophets, having formally made their accusation, demanded a sentence of death; appealing to the crowd to support their charge. But Jewish law permitted a prisoner to defend himself, and Jeremiah at once took advantage of the privilege. Addressing, alike, the judges and the crowd, he boldly told them that it was Jehovah, not he, who had spoken.

"XXVI. 12. Jehovah,"[1] said he, "sent me to prophesy against this house and against this city all the words ye have heard. (It is not therefore against me, but against God, you are contending!) 13. Amend your ways, then, and your doings, and obey the voice of Jehovah, your God; and He will not execute the judgments He has uttered against you. 14. But as for me, I am in your hand; do with me as seems to you good and meet. 15. Be assured, however, that, if you kill me, you bring innocent blood on yourselves, on your city, and on its citizens, for it is the very truth, that I have been sent by Jehovah, to speak in your ears every word I have uttered."

The defence was triumphant, and it was, as it ought to have been, successful. "This man," said the judges, "is not worthy to die, for he has only spoken to us in the name of Jehovah, our God." Amidst all their worldliness and venality, they for once recognized what was just. The fearless words of the prophet, moreover, may have awed them for the moment, as those of Paul did Festus.[2] Nor had he been without friends, for Ahikam, one of the court, stood by him throughout.[3] He found support, also, where he might not have expected it. A number of the elders of the towns and villages of Judah came out from the crowd, and addressed the bench in his favour.[4]

[1] Jer. xxvi. 12-14.
[2] Acts xxiv. 5.
[3] Jer. xxvi. 24.
[4] Jer. xxvi. 16.

"18. The prophet Micah of Moresheth," said they, "who prophesied in the days of Hezekiah, said to all the people of Judah—Thus saith Jehovah, 'Zion shall be ploughed like a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the Lord's house be turned into a wooded height.'[1] 19. Did Hezekiah the king, and all Judah, put him to death? Did he not (rather) fear Jehovah, and pray to Him, so that He repented of the evil He had spoken against them? (If we kill Jeremiah,) we are committing (what will bring) great evil against our souls!"

After such a defence, nothing remained but to dismiss the prophet at once, as innocent of all blame. But the danger he escaped had been real,[2] for Urijah, his contemporary, a prophet, had already, as we have seen, been brought back, by Jehoiakim, from Egypt, and beheaded, for language very similar.

Meanwhile, great events were transpiring on the Tigris. The united armies of Babylon and Media, after a long siege, had taken Nineveh. Its last king, variously known as Assuredilili, Saracus, Esarhaddon II., or Sardanapalus VII.,[3] has left few traces of his reign, beyond an inscription on some bricks in a small palace which he had built. He still, however, called himself "king of nations and of the earth."[4] But the end of his glory was at hand. A host of enemies had gathered round his capital in the very year of Jehoiakim's accession, B.C. 609. The Medes and Babylonians were the chief assailants, but they had numerous contingents from widely separate regions; for the whole earth seemed to have risen up at last against its destroyer. With the Medes, under Cyaxares, marched bands of wild

[1] Vol. iv. p. 369. Mic. iii. 12. **Jer. xxvi. 18, 19.** [2] **Jer. xxvi. 20-24.**

[3] Sayce, *Records of the Past*, vol. xi. p. 79. Vigouroux, vol. iv. p. 284. Nothing certain is known of the last kings of Nineveh. G. Smith thinks there were two after Assurbanipal; Oppert recognizes two, Assuredilili and Sardanapalus VII. Schrader fancies Assuredilili was the last king. Saracus seems a corruption of this name, as Sardanapalus is of Assurbanipal.

[4] *Western Asiatic Inscriptions*, vol. i. pl. 8. n. 3.

Cimmerians, from beyond the Caucasus; the warriors of Van, from the mountains of Armenia; the tribe of Sepharad from the shores of the Black Sea;[1] and a force of Persians.[2] Nabopolassar, the king of Babylon, once the trusted general of Assyria, had with him troops of Arabs from the distant south, and doubtless many other auxiliaries. Assyria, however, died hard. If we may trust the Greek authorities, for there are no others, the assailants were three times defeated; but a fresh force having joined them from the east, a battle was fought outside the gates, in which a brother of the king of Nineveh was killed, and the Assyrian army, armed in its various battalions with bows and arrows, lances, javelins, clubs, swords, daggers, coats of mail, and shields, after doing its best, was routed. Assuredilili, driven at last to make a final stand in his capital, closed its gates, before which the enemy presently sat down, determined to capture the great stronghold. The siege is said to have lasted over two years, for the walls are still, in many places, 50 feet high, while their original height and thickness may be judged, apart from the questionable statements of ancient authors, by the fact that the mound formed by the moulder-ing mud-brick of which they were built is from 100 to 200 feet broad.[3] Some fragments of tablets, the bad writing of which seems to shew that they were only the first rough text, survive from these days of mortal struggle. The king had proclaimed a solemn assembly, to invoke the gods, and gain their help to raise the blockade and avert the attack. But it is a question if it was ever held, for the capture of Nineveh and the destruction of the empire seem to have prevented a fair copy of the proclamation having been made.

[1] *Records of the Past*, vol. xi. p. 79. [2] Smith's *Assyria*, p. 190.
[3] *Nineve*, Herzog, 2d chap.

Some lines of the second fragment are complete. They run thus:

"O Sun-god,[1] great Lord, I have prayed to thee. O god of fixed destiny, remove our sin. Let the general proclaim among the ranks sacred rites and festivals for 100 days and 100 nights, from the third of this month Iyar,[2] to the fifteenth of Ab.[3] We learn that the soldiers of Cyaxares, and those of the Cimmerians, the men of Van, and other enemies, are multitudinous, and inundate the country round."

A great assault had been delivered by "the rebels" on the seventh day of the feast, and they had then marched off, with a train of battering engines and other machines of war, against various Assyrian towns and cities, a number of which fell into their hands. A momentary glimpse into the long dead ages, and then the darkness of three thousand years falls, once more, on besieged and besieger! A great rise of the Tigris, in the third spring, or perhaps the filtrations from the huge moats,[4] flooded as a means of defence, brought about the fall of the city, undermining part of the wall. Ruin was inevitable after such a catastrophe, but the king determined not to fall alive into the hands of his enemies. Gathering his wives and treasures into one part of the palace, he set the building on fire, and perished in the flames, with those round him. It was, apparently, the year B.C. 606,[5] the third after the death of Josiah. Entering the city by a breach caused apparently by the softening of the foundations of the wall, which were only of earth, by the water of the moat, let in, as I have said, for defence—undermined

[1] *Records of the Past*, vol. xi. p. 82. [2] April. [3] July.

[4] "Nineveh," Herzog, 2te Auf.

[5] B.C. 606 in Clinton's *Fasti Hellen.*, vol. i. p. 269. Schrader gives the date of the siege as from 609–606.

thus, the rampart opened with a wild crash, and sank in a great cleft before the eyes of the Medes and "Chaldæans"[1] —the besiegers laid waste its palaces and temples, and carried off its inhabitants into captivity. Built only of dried mud, the houses soon crumbled into low mounds of dust. Nor did Nineveh ever rise again. There is no mention of it in the records of the great Persian dynasty of Darius and Herodotus, who passed very near its site, if not actually over it, in the middle of the fifth century B.C., speaks of the Tigris as "the river on which Nineveh formerly stood."[2] Fifty years later,[3] its very name had been forgotten, for Xenophon, who encamped on its site, or very near it, speaks only of a "great deserted city there, called Larissa, inhabited in old times by the Medes, and of another, 24 miles off,[4] called Mespila, the wall of which alone remained."[5] So utterly had the "Bloody City" perished. "The gates of her rivers (that is, canals) had been opened; her palaces dissolved."[6] The words of Nahum and Zephaniah had been literally fulfilled. Nothing is left of private architecture, or even of its graves, for sepulchral architecture did not exist in Assyria, and hence it has yielded to explorers only a few jars filled with bones. Corpses were generally carried away to Lower Chaldæa, which continued to be for long ages a vast cemetery, at the service of all the inhabitants of all Mesopotamia. After having ruled for more than 600 years, with hideous tyranny and violence, from the Caucasus and the Caspian to the Persian Gulf, and from beyond the Tigris to Asia Minor and Egypt, it had vanished like a

[1] *Babelons Manual*, p. 6.

[2] Herod., i. 193. Herodotus returned from his travels before B.C. 454. Supposing he passed the site of Nineveh in B.C. 456, there would have been an interval of only 150 years from the taking of the city. Yet its site was all that remained of it.

[3] B.C. 401.

[4] Six parasangs.

[5] Xen., *Anab.*, iii. 4, 7, 10.

[6] Nah. ii. 6–11.

dream; its very site doubtful for nearly twenty-four centuries! The cup of its iniquity, full, at last, to the brim, had been held to its lips! Such a catastrophe was well-nigh without parallel in the history of empires. To the farthest verge of civilization it filled, for the time, the minds of all men.

NINEVEH.
(From Rich.)

"XXXI. 3. Behold, the Assyrian was a cedar of Lebanon [wrote Ezekiel],[1] fair in its leafage; a thicket for shadow; mighty for height;

[1] **Ezek. xxxi. 3.** Ewald translates the word Asshur as meaning the highest cedar, but Hitzig shews that this is a mistake, and that the prophet speaks of Assyria. Smend applies the passage to Egypt, but the grounds he advances for doing so are of little weight. The city of Assur had nothing to do with the god. The name seems to be a corruption of the Akkadian A-usar, "water-bank," changed by its Semitic

its top rose into the clouds. 4. The waters had made him great;[1] the flood had nourished him; its streams flowing round the place where he grew, and sending out its canals to all the trees of the field. 5. Through this, his height was exalted above all the trees of the field: his branches grew great; his boughs stretched themselves out, through the many waters the flood supplied. 6. All the fowls of the heavens made their nest in them, and all the wild beasts of the field brought forth their young under his branches, and all the great nations sat under his shadow. 7. Thus fair was he in his size and in the length of his branches; for his root was by many waters. 8. The cedars in the garden of God were not tall enough to hide him; the cypresses could not equal his branches, nor the plane trees his boughs: no tree in the garden of God was like him for beauty. 9. I had made him fair (says Jehovah), through the multitude of his branches, and all the trees of Eden, in the garden of God, envied him!

"10. Therefore, thus says the Lord Jehovah: Because he was great in height, and shot up his boughs among the clouds, and his heart was lifted up by this greatness—11. I have delivered him into the hands of a mighty leader of the nations; he will surely deal with him; for his wickedness I have driven him out.[2] 12. Strange and terrible peoples cut him down, and left him lying on the mountains; his branches fell into all the valleys; his boughs lay broken in pieces in all the hollows of the earth, and all the nations went from under his shadow, and left him. 13. On his fallen trunk all the birds of the heaven alight, and all the wild beasts of the field trample on his branches. 14. (All this is done) that no trees by the waters boast themselves of their height, nor lift up their crown among the clouds; that none of all the trees that drink up the waters vaunt themselves in their tallness;[3] for they are all delivered over to death, to the underworld, with the sons of men who have sunk into the grave.

inhabitants, first, into Assur, and then into Asur, with a possible reference to the word "esurra," the bed (of a river). The confusion between Assôr, the god, and Assur the city, had the effect of identifying the god with his city, until the city itself became a god. Assur was like the Jahveh of Israel, the national god of a race. He is "king of all gods" in a sense in which none of the other deities of Babylonia were; brooking no rival, and allowing neither wife nor son to share in the honours which he claims for himself alone. He is essentially a jealous god, and is mightier than the Babylonian Baalim; more awe-inspiring, and more powerful. We can, in fact, trace in him all the lineaments, upon which, under other conditions, there might have been built up as pure a faith as that of the God of Israel.

[1] Ezek. xxxi. 4-14.

[2] The pronouns vary in person in the Hebrew. I have used the second throughout for clearness, English not permitting the same usage.

[3] Ewald, "that no water-drinker contend in its pride with its God."

"15. Thus says the Lord Jehovah,[1] In the day when he went down to Sheol I caused a lamentation (to be made) : I covered up the flood in the earth, on his account (that it should no more stream forth), and held back its streams, and its many waters were stayed ; I robed Lebanon in black for him, and all the trees of the field drooped because of him. 16. I made the nations tremble at the crash of his fall, when I cast him down to Sheol, to those that are sunk in the Pit ; and all the trees of Eden in the underworld[2]—the best and fairest of Lebanon, all water-drinkers[3]—comforted themselves, 17. for they, too, went down with him to Sheol, to them that have fallen by the sword—they, who were his strength, who sat under his shadow in the midst of the nations."

While the siege of Nineveh was in progress, Necho had pressed on to the Euphrates, immediately after having installed Jehoiakim king at Jerusalem, and had taken the great city of Carchemish,[4] the ancient capital of the Hittite empire, and still, in his day, a place of high commercial importance. The Medes and Babylonians, with their allies —too much occupied in besieging the capital on the Tigris, and subduing the territories east of the Euphrates—were in no condition to trouble him, for the time, in his new acquisitions. Egypt could now boast of having restored the ancient glories of Rameses II. or Thothmes III.[5] From Carchemish, southwards, all Syria, Phœnicia, and Palestine, with Idumæa, and the nations east of the Jordan, were under his sway.[6] The Assyrian dominions east of the Euphrates were divided between them, after the fall of Nineveh, by the two chief powers ; Media getting the lion's share ; Babylon obtaining, in the meantime, only Babylonia[7] and the regions south of it, with the expectation, however, of wresting Necho's conquests from him, and only waiting an opportunity to do so.

[1] **Ezek. xxxi. 15–17.** [2] The great rulers of men.
[3] Planted by the waters, and therefore vigorous. [4] Jer. xlvi. 2.
[5] Vol. ii. pp. 55 9. [6] *Babylonia*, Smith and Sayce, p. 152. [7] Herod., i. 106.

Jerablus, the ancient Carchemish, lay on the right or western bank of the Upper Euphrates, half way between the villages of Sadjur and Biredjik, about 320 miles almost exactly north of Jerusalem by the compass; about 80 miles due east of the uppermost corner of the Levant; and about 40 miles south-west of Urfa. To the late George Smith belongs the honour of identifying its site, during his last fatal journey. His note-books, now in the British Museum, inform us[1] that two days after leaving Aleppo, he reached Meskeneh, in "the vast bed of the Euphrates," and found "large mounds, brick buildings, (the ruins of) a considerable place." Five hours from this, the river valley opened out on a plain, on which were "traces of a great city." Next day other "immense ruins" were met, but they were mostly Saracenic. The following morning he rode along the banks of the Euphrates to Jerablus,[2] and found there "a grand site, vast walls and palace mounds, 8,000 feet round; many monoliths with inscriptions." It was "the site of Carchemish." The heaps of earth which mark the former walls of this great capital, measure hardly two miles in circumference, but a vast population seems, from many indications, to have lived along the banks of the Euphrates, outside the fortifications. Situated in the midst of a rich country, at a safe distance from the barbarians of the north, and the wild tribes of the south, Carchemish became at a very early period the centre of the great caravan trade to and from Western Asia,[3] and rose to still greater importance as a mercantile city after its conquest by Assyria.[4] Its

[1] Quoted by Fried. Delitzsch, in *Wo lag das Paradies?* p. 266.

[2] Written by Smith, Yaraboloos.

[3] Sayce had identified Carchemish with Circesium, *Records of the Past*, vol. iii. p. 88. Maspero fancied he had found its site at Bambyce or Mabog, a few miles from the Euphrates, east of Aleppo, *Histoire Ancienne, etc.*, p. 186. *De Carchemis Oppidi situ.* 1873.

[4] By Sargon, B.C. 717.

"maneh," a coin weighing the sixtieth part of a talent, was one of the chief standards of commerce, far and near.[1] Its sculptures, bas-reliefs, and inscriptions in the Hittite language, attest a very advanced civilization, and, indeed, it was probably through its agency that the culture of Asia passed to Greece, by way of the Hittite kingdoms of Asia Minor.

Necho and the Egyptians had been in Carchemish for nearly three years, when the fall of Nineveh left Nabopolassar free to turn his forces against them. So long as they held that city, his advance was barred to the west and south; the only regions left open to him by the treaty with Cyaxares. Far from their base in Egypt, however, and composed largely of mercenaries, the army of Necho, though certain to offer a brave resistance, was hardly equal to a conflict with the veteran troops of Nabopolassar. Great efforts were made to bring strong reinforcements from the Nile, the march of which has been vividly painted by Jeremiah, who may have seen these, or the troops of a later campaign, hurrying forward. It was a time of intense excitement in Judah. Jehoiakim was a vassal of Necho, and would only exchange his yoke for that of Babylon, if Carchemish fell. But the prophet foresaw the result. "The word of the Lord" left no doubt of it. The Chaldæan was to be victorious. It was in B.C. 606, the fourth year of Jehoiakim—shortly after the fall of Nineveh—that matters came to a crisis. Speaking, as it were, to the Egyptian king and his army, Jeremiah begins:

[1] Sayce, *Records of the Past*, vol. iii. p. 88. The "Maneh," or Mina, was equal to 50 sacred shekels. See Septuagint, Ezek. xlv. 12. In 1 Kings x. 17, another shekel is mentioned of half the value (weight); 100 going to the Mina. It was the *common* shekel, worth about 1*s.* 4*d.*; the sacred shekel being worth about 2*s.* 8*d.* Mühlau und Volck, art. "Maneh." Madden, *Money and Weights of the Bible*, art. "Shekel."

"XLVI. 3. Prepare ye the round target[1] (for the light armed troops), and the shield (that covers the whole body, for your heavy infantry), and press forward to the battle! 4. Harness the (chariot) horses (ye chariot fighters); mount the chargers, ye cavalry;[2] array yourselves in helmets, (ye footmen); brighten your spears; put on your coats of mail!"[3]

But the prophet sees the well-appointed host defeated.

"5. Why do I see them dismayed? They turn back: their chief warriors are struck down; they flee at their swiftest, and do not look back. Terror is on every side, says Jehovah! 6. The quickest runner will not get off, nor the warrior save himself. They shall stumble and fall in the north, by the river Euphrates.

"7. Who is this that comes like the Nile (in flood, when it is overflowed)? Whose waters toss themselves (like the waves of the Nile branches in the Delta)? 8. It is Egypt. It rises up like the Nile: its waters move in waves like the Nile arms. 'I will rise and cover the earth,' says he: 'I will destroy cities, and those that dwell in them.' 9. Rear up, ye horse; rush on, ye chariots; go forth, ye mighty men of Cush and of Libya,[4] who carry the shield; ye Lydians,[5] who hold and bend the bow!

"10. But that day is (not *theirs* but) the Lord's—Jehovah of hosts; a day of vengeance; to avenge Himself on His adversaries. The sword will devour till it glut itself with slaughter: it will drink up their blood. For the Lord Jehovah of Hosts will offer up a sacrifice (to His righteous indignation) in the north, by the river Euphrates.

"11. Go up (from thy land) to Gilead, and fetch balm, O virgin daughter of Egypt! But in vain heapest thou up cures:[6] there is no healing[7] for thee! 12. The nations have heard of thy shame, and the cry (of mocking against thee) has filled the earth. For warrior ran against warrior (in their eager flight), and both fell together!"

The defeat of Necho, in spite of his trusted Greek mercenaries,[8] took place in the year B.C. 606, and seems to have

[1] **Jer. xlvi. 3-12.**
[2] Rosenmüller.
[3] Or, corselets.
[4] They were the heavy armed soldiers.
[5] Men of Lud, not of Lydia in Asia Minor. The Ludim were an African people. Gen. x. 22; they were the light armed troops.
[6] Literally, "medicines."
[7] Literally, "plasters."
[8] Lenormant, *Hist. Ancienne*, vol. ii. p. 393.

resulted in his hasty retreat to Egypt. Nabopolassar was now old, and success had transformed him from a rebel, whom all men were expected to denounce, to a great king, whom all should honour. Fortunately for his new empire, his eldest son, Nebuchadnezzar, "Nebo protect the crown,"[1] was admirably fitted to maintain and extend it. Hereafter he was to be pre-eminently *the* king of Babylon, for the reign of his father from B.C. 625 to B.C. 604 only laid the foundation of the Chaldæan supremacy, and it fell under the attack of Cyrus within twenty-four years, at the most, after Nebuchadnezzar's death in B.C. 562,[2] when he had reigned forty-two or forty-four years. The able son of an able father, he threw himself into the struggle with Egypt with all the vigour of early manhood, and soon gained so great a renown that, in after ages, even the Greeks had heard of him as almost like their own Hercules, in his valour and great deeds.[3] To Jeremiah he seemed like a lion coming up from the thickets of Jordan,[4] breaking the bones of his prey,[5] or like an eagle swooping down on it.[6] Ezekiel compares him to a great eagle, with vast wings of mighty

[1] The name is variously spelt, but it seems better to retain the orthography of the A. V.

[2] Schrader. In the art. "Nebucadnezar," in Riehm, Schrader makes the reign of that prince forty-two years. In his art. "Chaldæa," in the same *Encyc.*, he makes it forty-four years, putting his death-year in the one case as B.C. 562, in the other as B.C. 560. The incorporation of the name of the god Nebo in that of the famous king shews the honour in which that deity was held. Nebo was the god of letters, and wherever the literary class went, Nebo their patron went with them. In Assyria he was as much honoured as in Babylonia itself, and his name and worship passed to the Semitic races of the West. Moses died on the peak of Mount Nebo, and cities bearing the same name stood within the borders of the tribes of Reuben and Judah. Moreover, when the Israelites entered on their literary era, the old name "Roeh" or "Seer" was exchanged for the more literary one of "Nebi" or "Prophet."

[3] Strabo, XV. i. 6. Jos., *Ant.*, X. xi. 1, quotes Megasthenes as using this comparison.

[4] Jer. xlix. 19; xxv. 38.

[5] Jer. l. 17.

[6] Jer. xlviii. 40; xlix. 22.

sweep, full of feathers of many colours—the various nations under his banners, and the splendour of his great captains —tearing the branches from the cedars of Lebanon, and breaking off their twigs.[1] Such terror of his fierce warriors filled all lands, that even a few of their wounded men were said to be more feared than an army of other soldiers.[2] Sweeping on resistlessly, they made Babylon "the hammer of the whole earth;"[3] a dragon swallowing up the nations.[4]

NEBUCHADNEZZAR.

From a black cameo preserved in the Berlin Museum. The likeness is surrounded by an inscription in cuneiform characters, as follows: "To Merodach, his master, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, for the preservation of his life (by the god), has caused this to be made." The cameo is thought by the German Assyriologists to represent the Nebuchadnezzar of the Bible.

To reach Carchemish, Nebuchadnezzar had to march 500 miles to the north-west, along the valley of the Euphrates. There the forces of Necho, composed of Egyptians, Libyans, Greeks, and auxiliaries from tributary provinces, were ignominiously swept away; only the wreck of the army reaching Egypt, closely pursued as they fled along the coast of Palestine, to the Nile. All Syria and Palestine was, thus, lost,[5] and passed into the hands of Babylon, now the heir of Assyria. Among others, Jehoiakim had furnished a contingent to Necho, and from this, and the fighting men supplied by other petty kings, numerous prisoners were made. But Jehoiakim and the rest of Necho's vassals were themselves to escape for the time. The death of Nabopolassar, at Babylon, abruptly checked the triumphant course of the Chaldæans, so that they had to content themselves with retiring, for the moment, with their

[1] Ezek. xvii. 3, 4, 7. [2] Jer. xxxvii. 10. [3] Jer. l. 23.
[4] Jer. li. 34. [5] Jos., *Ant.*, X. vi. 1.

prisoners and booty ; the captives led away from Judah forming the earliest of their countrymen taken to Babylon—the advanced guard, as it proved, of the whole of their nation, hereafter to settle with them as exiles on the banks of the Euphrates.

An invasion of Egypt itself had been intended, but news of his father's death having reached Nebuchadnezzar before he had crossed its frontier, he hurried back to Babylon to secure the crown, taking the short route across the desert, attended by only a light escort, to save time, and thus reaching his capital with unexpected speed.[1] The generals, meanwhile, brought back more leisurely the train of Jewish, Phœnician, Syrian, and Egyptian prisoners, and the vast accumulation of spoil, by the longer northern route.[2]

On arriving at Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar found everything quiet. The priests had kept the throne safely for him, as the legitimate heir. He had only to appear, and assume the crown. His reign of over forty years from this date[3] comprised more than half the duration, and all the glory, of the Babylonian empire ; but, unfortunately, no inscriptions remain to describe his conquests to us, though from other sources we know how widely he spread the terror of his arms.

The hereditary ambition of the Assyrian kings to become masters of Egypt, passed to Nebuchadnezzar and made him a constant terror to the Pharaohs. They had, in former times, tried to shelter themselves behind the Syrian states ; but after the fall of Damascus and Samaria, their greatest hope had been to play the part of conquerors in Asia, during the weakness of Nineveh, and thus protect them-

[1] Berosus, see Jos., *Ant.*, X. xi. 1.
[2] Berosus, quoted by Eusebius in his *Chronicles*.
[3] B.C. 605-562 (43 years). Keil.

selves at home by advancing the frontier of their empire. The defeat at Carchemish, however, had overthrown this dream. But, fortunately for Necho, this disaster had happened on the Euphrates, and thus left him time to recover. He belonged to a brave race, who had fought for a hundred years to gain the crown of Egypt, and he would not resign it without a hard struggle. Refitting his fleet and reorganizing his army, he waited an opportunity to try his fortune once more, counting on his skill in stirring up the Jews and Phœnicians to support him.

Since the miseries they had endured from Assyria, the Phœnicians had cherished a profound hatred of rulers from the East, and this was largely shared by the various neighbouring states—Ammon, Moab, Edom, and Judah. Jehoiakim had reigned three years, and was beginning his fourth year at the time of the Egyptian defeat,[1] and near its end at the accession of Nebuchadnezzar.[2] The war, suspended by Nabopolassar's death, was renewed with the opening of the next military season; for only part of the year was then thought available for campaigns.[3] Having secured the throne, Nebuchadnezzar again set out for Palestine, at the close of the fourth year of Jehoiakim; his approach throwing Judah and all the neighbouring countries into the utmost consternation, for Necho had skilfully played upon their hatred of the foreigner, and kept them from doing him homage. Jeremiah, however, still foresaw that the Chaldæan power was irresistible, and strove to bring his countrymen to a willing submission, as the only means of preserving the State. Even human sagacity might have

[1] The date of the defeat at Carchemish is one of the points on which all seem to agree. Bertheau, Keil, Ebers, and Schrader alike, give the close of B.C. 606 or beginning of B.C. 605.

[2] Jer. xxv. 1; xlvi. 2. [3] 2 Sam. xi. 1.

taught them, indeed, that resistance would lead to deportation; but it was further revealed to Jeremiah, that the captivity to follow would last seventy years, or two generations of men. Now, for the first time, he names the Chaldæans as the enemy destined to destroy Judah; the defeat of Egypt in the battle of Carchemish, lately fought, shewing clearly that Babylon, and not the Nile, was to be the great power of the immediate future. Till now, he had only spoken of the foe coming from the North, as if it might have been the Scythian hordes, once more appearing, as they had done recently, in the days of Josiah. Now, however, the horizon had cleared. Knowing this, his efforts to influence his fellow-countrymen for their own good were unceasing. One appeal to them followed another. In the first of these, he thus speaks:

"XXV. 3. From the thirteenth year of Josiah,[1] the son of Amon, king of Judah, to this day, these three and twenty years, the word of Jehovah has come to me, and I have spoken it to you—all ye people of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem—early and late, but ye have not hearkened. 4. Jehovah has also sent to you all his servants, the prophets, earnestly and continually. But ye have not hearkened or bent your ear, to hear their message, which was this: 5. 'Turn ye, every one from his evil way and from the wickedness of your doings, and then ye shall dwell for ever and ever in the land which Jehovah gave to you and to your fathers. 6. And go not after other gods, to serve and worship them, so that ye may not provoke Me to anger through the works of your hands, and cause Me to do you harm.' 7. But ye have not hearkened to Me, says Jehovah; as if ye wished to provoke Me to anger with the works of your hands, to your own hurt.

"8. Therefore, thus says Jehovah of hosts: Because ye have not heard My words, 9. behold! I will send for and fetch all the races of the north, says Jehovah, and I will send to Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, My servant, and will bring them (all) against this land and its inhabitants, and against all the nations that are round about it,

[1] Jer. xxv. 3-9.

and give them up to utter destruction,[1] and make them an astonishment and a hissing, and a perpetual desert. 10. And I will take from them the voice of mirth and gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride ; the sound of the mill, and the light of the lamp.[2] 11. And the whole land will become a desolation and an astonishment. And these nations shall serve the king of Babylon SEVENTY YEARS."[3]

Babylon, itself, the instrument of God's wrath, will not, however, escape.

"12. But when seventy years are full I will punish (the king of Babylon and) that nation, saith Jehovah, for their iniquity (and the land of the Chaldæans), and will make it a perpetual desert. 13. And I will bring on that land all My words that I have pronounced against it; all that is written in this book, which Jeremiah has prophesied against all the nations.[4] 14. For many nations and great kings will make them their servants, and I will punish them, according to their doings and the work of their hands."[5]

The solemnity of the judgment impending on Judah is intensified by the recital of those about to fall on other

[1] Literally, will "ban them," *i.e.*, devote them to destruction. **Jer. xxv. 10–14.**

[2] See vol. iv. p. 132. Burton's *Inner Life of Syria*, vol. i. p. 264.

[3] From the fourth year of Jehoiakim, B.C. 606, to the first year of the separate reign of Cyrus, B.C. 536, was 70 years. It is computed thus : Nebuchadnezzar reigned 43 years; his son, Evil Merodach, 2 years ; Neriglissar, 4 years ; Labrosoarchad, 9 months ; Nabonad, 17 years = 66 years and 9 months. Add to this a year from Nebuchadnezzar's first invasion of Palestine to the death of his father and his own accession, and the two years' reign of Darius the Mede (Cyaxares) over Babylon, and we have 69¾ years. Keil.

[4] Hitzig, Graf, Naegelsbach, Ewald, and Dr. Payne Smith omit the words, verse 12, "the king of Babylon," and "the land of the Chaldæans," to the end of the 15th verse. They think it inconceivable that Jeremiah should at this period have openly named Babylon as doomed, since it would at once have infuriated Nebuchadnezzar and weakened the force of the prophet's appeals to his own people. But Keil, De Wette, Sachs, and Eichhorn, amongst others, retain them. The edition of the Septuagint published by the Christian Knowledge Society omits the passage, but Stier and Theile's edition retains it both in the Greek and in the Vulgate.

[5] The Vatican text puts the closing words of the thirteenth verse in uncial letters, as a title to what follows, thus : "THE (WORDS) WHICH JEREMIAH PROPHESIED AGAINST THE NATIONS ELAM." The Vatican text, the Codex C. (of less value), and the Alexandrine Codex (not the Alexandrine text) omit ver. 14. Elam comes first, in the Septuagint, among the nations denounced.

nations, for the prophet foresees that all the countries he is about to name will be absorbed, as well as Judah, into the growing Chaldæan Empire.

"15. For thus says the Lord Jehovah of Israel to me,[1] Take this cup of the wine of My wrath out of My hand, and give it to all the nations to whom I send thee, to drink. 16. That they may drink it, and reel, and become demented, before the sword I am about to send on them.

"17. And I took the cup from Jehovah's hand, and let all the nations drink it to whom Jehovah sent me,[2] 18. Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, and her kings and princes—to make them a desolation and an astonishment, and a hissing and a curse, forthwith.[3] 19. Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, his servants, his princes, and all his people, 20. and all the nations tributary to him,[4] and all the kings of the land of Uz, and of the land of the Philistines, Ashkelon, Gaza, Ekron, and the remnant left in Ashdod;[5] 21. Edom, Moab, and the B'nai Ammon; 22. and all the kings of Tyre, and of Sidon, and of the coasts[6] beyond the Sea; 23. Dedan and Tema[7] and Buz,[8] and all with the corners of their hair shorn away.[9] 24. And all the kings of (Northern) Arabia and of the tribes of various races that dwell in the desert. 25. And all the kings of Zimri,[10] all the kings of Elam,[11] and all the kings of the Medes, 26. and all the kings of the North, far and near, one and all, and all the kingdoms of the world, on the face of

[1] **Jer. xxv. 15-26.**

[2] The prophet must, necessarily, be recounting the details of a vision.

[3] Ewald. The Alexandrine Codex. The Vatican text and the Codex C. omit "as it is this day."

[4] A. V. "mingled people," here, and in ver. 24. It seems to mean the tribes of different race from the Egyptian, but under its sway. Cheyne and Driver translate it "mercenaries." Ewald renders it substantially as in the text. He is supported by Keil.

[5] Ashdod had been besieged for twenty-nine years by Psammetichus, father of Necho—there would, therefore, be only a remnant of its people left. Gath is omitted from the list of Philistine cities, perhaps as no longer independent.

[6] Or islands.

[7] An Arab tribe in North Arabia. Job vi. 19. Isa. xxi. 14. Taima, in Arabic, means "desert." Kneucker.

[8] An Arab tribe, in the desert, east of Edom. Kneucker.

[9] Jer. ix. 26; xlix. 28, 32. See p. 191.

[10] Seemingly an Arab people between Arabia and Elam.

[11] Elam was now becoming Persia.

the earth.[1] Last of all, the king of Sheshach will drink the cup of God's wrath.[2]

"27. Say therefore to them,[3] thus says Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel: Drink and be drunken, and vomit, and fall, and rise no more, before the sword which I will send among you. 28. And if they refuse to take the cup from your hand, say to them, Thus says Jehovah of hosts, Drink it you shall! 29. For, lo, I will begin with the city called by My name, in this outpouring of evil, and will *you* be left unpunished? Ye shall not! for I shall summon the sword to do its work on all the inhabitants of the earth, says Jehovah of hosts!

"30. Therefore, speak all these words to them, and say: Jehovah will roar (like a lion) from (heaven) on high, and utter His voice[4] from His holy habitation. He will roar with a mighty voice against His own land:[5] He shall shout[6] like him that treads the wine-press, against all the inhabitants of the earth. 31. The (mighty) sound will roll (like a storm), even to the ends of the earth; for Jehovah has a controversy with the nations; He will reckon as a judge with all flesh; the godless will He give to the sword! So says Jehovah!

"32. Thus says Jehovah of hosts, Behold, trouble will pass on from nation to nation; a mighty storm (of wrath) will pour down from the farthest ends of the earth. 33. And those slain by Jehovah will lie, on that day, from one end of the earth to the other: they will not be lamented, nor gathered up, nor buried; they will be left like dung on the face of the earth! 34. Howl, ye shepherds![7] Cry aloud! Ye lordliest of the flock, strew yourselves with ashes! For your days for

[1] This is only a general expression, and not to be taken literally. See Dan. ii. 38; iv. 22. It means a vast empire, not an absolutely universal one.

[2] In Jer. li. 41, Sheshach is used for Babylon. Jerome notices this, perhaps through a hint from his Jewish teacher, as to the old tradition. According to this, the word is a cipher formed after the rule called by the Jews Athbasch, by which the letters of the alphabet are used backwards, the last standing for the first, and so, throughout. See Buxtorff, *Lex.*, art. "Athbasch." A similar example is found in Jer. li. 1, where Casdim is expressed by the words Laib Kamai. Keil repudiates the idea that it is used to prevent the name of Babel appearing, and thinks its object is to obtain a striking meaning. This, he makes, "a sinking" -to indicate that Babylon will fall and not rise again. For various renderings see Gesenius, *Thes.*, p. 1486. The consonants Sh Sh Ch, on the principle of Athbasch, stand for B B L, the consonants of Babel. On the same principle, L B K M Y stand for C(a) S D I M=Chaldæans. The origin of this secret system is of unknown antiquity among the Jews. See Leyrer, in Herzog's *Ency.*, vol. xiv. pp. 1-20.

[3] **Jer. xxv. 27-34.** [4] "Thunder." Ewald.

[5] From the verb for "to sit," "to rest," = peace, habitation, dwelling. Here, Judah.

[6] The cry of one rushing on to war. [7] Kings.

being slaughtered are fulfilled: I will dash you to pieces like a costly vessel. 35. And there shall be no flight for the shepherds;[1] no escape for the lordliest of the flocks! 36. Hark! the cry of the shepherds, the wail of the lordliest of the flock; for Jehovah has laid waste their pasture, 37. and the peaceful meadows are destroyed before the burning wrath of Jehovah! 38. Like a lion, He has forsaken his covert; yea, their land has become a desert, before the fierceness of the Destroyer; before the fierceness of His wrath!"

The advance of Nebuchadnezzar, with a great army of Chaldæans and Syrians,[2] spread terror, as has been said, on all sides. The population of the villages and country towns flocked to Jerusalem;[3] even friendly shepherd tribes from the wilderness pastures hurrying to the protection of its walls. Among others, came the B'nai Rechab, a half Arab sect of Jewish Puritans, who had risen in the days of Elijah, as an indirect result of his life and influence.[4] Descended from a branch of the tribe of Kenites,[5] who came into Palestine with the Israelites, and had zealously adopted the Hebrew faith, they had retained their nomadic habits, wandering over the open spaces in the land, especially those of the northern districts.[6] One of their chiefs, Jonadab, the colleague of Jehu in his violent suppression of idolatry, under the dynasty of Ahab, had modelled his clan after the Nazarite ideal,[7] to insure its more thorough separation from the wickedness of the times; taking the idea, apparently, from the example of Elijah and that of the prophets. Following his recommendations, they henceforth abjured wine, and made a vow neither to build houses, nor till the ground, nor plant vineyards; re-

[1] Jer. xxv. 35-38. [2] Jer. xxxv. 11. [3] Jer. xxxvi. 9.
[4] See vol. ii. p. 134; vol. iv. pp. 66, 155. [5] 1 Chron. ii. 55.
[6] The "shearing-house," 2 Kings x. 14, was probably a spot connected with the flocks of the wandering Kenites. One branch of the tribe roamed over the uplands of the Negeb in the south. 1 Sam. xv. 6; xxvii. 10; xxx. 29. Another branch had their tents near Kadesh in Naphtali, in the north. Judg. iv. 11, 17; v. 24.
[7] Amos ii. 11.

pudiating all that was associated with a settled life, as tending to luxury and moral degeneracy, and withdrawing permanently to their tents on the lonely pastures, far from the haunts of men. The social corruption of the Northern Kingdom had grown terrible under the House of Ahab. Phœnician idolatry, luxury, and vice, had spread through the land. Jonadab resolved at once to save his people from contamination, and make their collective life a protest against the special sins of the day.

Streaming down from the North at the threatened advance of Nebuchadnezzar, an encampment of these zealous Puritans of Judaism now sought shelter in Jerusalem; pitching their tents in some open space in the city, and living apart from the general population,[1] under their sheik Jaazaniah—"he whom Jehovah hears."[2]

The fidelity of such rough sons of the desert to the ancient faith of Israel, marked them out amidst the common crowd, and made them objects of general interest. They must especially have excited the sympathy of those, like themselves, still true to the old religion; cheering them by a living proof that amidst the wide decay of morals, some remained faithful to the God of their fathers. Fidelity so striking was, indeed, fitted to read a lesson to the community at large, and it was used for this purpose by Jeremiah. Acting on a prophetic impulse, he brought their sheik and all the encampment, to a chamber within the temple precincts—that of the sons or disciples of Hanan, an unknown prophet—over the quarters of Maaseiah, the overseer of the guards of the temple gates, and next the room in which the chief men were wont to assemble for public

[1] Jer. xxxv. 2.

[2] The other names given of members of the tribe, are Jeremiah, "he whom Jehovah establishes;" and Habaziniah, perhaps, "the lamp of Jehovah."

business. Here, he caused large bowls of wine to be set before them, such as were placed before guests at a feast, and invited them to fill their cups from them, and drink. The proposal, made in mock earnest, must have been seen in that light, for otherwise nothing could have been in worse taste. Of course all, at once, and without hesitation, declined. They had vowed, they said, to obey the commands of their forefather Jonadab, and would be true to their pledge.[1] They could not think of touching wine.

Jeremiah had known that this would be their answer, and forthwith took advantage of it to point an address to the citizens. Turning to the crowd around, in the temple courts, he announced[2] that he had been sent by Jehovah to them and to the men of Judah to say:

"XXXV. 13. Will ye receive no instruction to hear My words? says Jehovah. 14. The words of Jonadab, the son of Rechab, which he commanded his sons, 'that they should drink no wine,' are obeyed; they drink none to this day, but still obey the command of their father (given two hundred and fifty years ago). But I (Jehovah), your God, have spoken to you continually (with earnest zeal), till now, but you have not listened to Me! 15. I have sent to you all My servants the prophets, unceasingly saying by them, 'Turn ye now every man from his evil way, and amend your doings, and walk no longer after other gods, to serve them, and ye shall dwell in the land which I have given to you and to your fathers.' But ye have not inclined your ear or obeyed Me. 16. The sons of Jonadab, the son of Rechab, have obeyed the command of their father, but this people have not obeyed Me!

"17. Therefore, thus says Jehovah, the God of hosts, the God of Israel: Behold, I bring on Judah and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, all the evil I have spoken against them, because I have spoken to them but they have not heard; I have called to them, but they have not answered!"

Then turning to the Rechabites, standing by, the prophet continued:

[1] Jer. xxxv. 1-11. [2] Jer. xxxv. 12-17.

"18. Thus says Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel:[1] Because ye have obeyed the command of your father Jonadab, and have kept all his precepts, and done all that he enjoined on you—19. therefore, thus says Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel: Jonadab, the son of Rechab, shall not, for ever, want a man to stand before Me."

Counterparts of this singular community, thus honoured by God, have occurred at different times, illustrating the tendency to similar asceticism in the East. The ancient Nabathæans neither sowed seed, nor planted fruit-trees, nor built houses,[2] and enforced these usages by death for their transgression. The Wahabees, who rose in the second half of last century, in Arabia, used neither wine, opium, nor tobacco, and proscribed luxury and self-indulgence of every kind. They were the zealots of Islamism, and their success was amazing. An army of 100,000 men was soon formed, ready to spread their opinions by the sword, and it was subdued, in the first quarter of this century,[3] only after desperate efforts, by Mahomed Ali and his son Ibrahim Pasha.

The assurance that the Rechabites would never want a man "to stand before God," has been strangely fulfilled. The phrase seemingly points to the adoption of members of the tribe into the priestly office, to "stand before God," like the sons of Levi.[4] Their strictness as Nazarites facilitated this advancement, for even so late as St. James the Just, Nazarites, by a singular exception, were permitted to enter the most sacred parts of the temple.[5] In keeping with this, the heading of the seventy-first Psalm, in the Septuagint, speaks of the sons of Jonadab as the first who were carried off to Babylon, and intimates that this Psalm had been com-

[1] **Jer. xxxv. 18-19.** [2] Diod. Sic., xix. 94.
[3] Brockhaus, *Lexicon*, vol. xv. pp. 270, ff.
[4] Deut. x. 8; xviii. 5, 7, Judg. xx. 28. Ps. cxxxiv. 1. Jer. xv. 19
[5] Eusebius, *Hist. Ecc.*, Bk. ii. ch. 23.

monly sung by them in the temple service.[1] A "son of Rechab" is named among the restorers of Jerusalem, after the Return,[2] and in the genealogies of the Chronicles,[3] which were drawn up at a very late period, a community of Rechabites, living at Jabez, are spoken of as scribes, that is, as occupied with the writing and study of the Law—an occupation in earlier times almost wholly engrossed by Levites.[4] Centuries later, Eusebius brings their name before us in a striking connection. While the mob were stoning James the Just, he tells us, "one of the priests, of the sons of Rechab, a son of the Rechabites spoken of by Jeremiah the prophet, cried out, 'Stop—what are you doing? He is praying for you,'"[5] so that, even in that day, a priestly order of Rechabites still survived.

But still later, notices of this people remain, to startle us by the echo their history gives of the words of Jeremiah. Benjamin of Tudela, who travelled in the East in the twelfth century, speaks of a community of Jews whom he met, who called themselves Rechabites. They tilled the ground, and kept flocks and herds, but abstained from wine and flesh, and gave tithes to the Rabbis, who studied the Law and led the public wailings for Jerusalem. They numbered 100,000, and lived under a prince of their own, who traced his descent from David.[6] Even in our own day, moreover, Dr. Wolff, the missionary traveller, met a tribe

[1] This is implied. The words are: "By David; *a Psalm sung* by the sons of Jonadab: even the first that were taken captive."

[2] Neh. iii. 14. [3] 1 Chron. ii. 55.

[4] The other classes named in 1 Chron. ii. 55, have been translated by the Vulgate as "singers," "trumpet blowers," and "dwellers in tents." But later lexicographers do not support this rendering. Wellhausen translates Tirathites as "trumpeters," "blowers of the sacred trumpets;" Shimeathites, as "men of the tradition;" and Suchathites, as "dwellers in tents."

[5] Eusebius, *Hist. Ecc.*, Bk. ii. ch. 23. He is quoting from Hegesippus, who was alive in the early part of the second century of our era.

[6] *Benjamin of Tudela.* Asher's edit., pp. 112-114.

near Senaa, in Arabia, who claim to be the Rechabites. In answer to a question as to their origin, one of them replied by reading from an Arabic Bible the words of Jeremiah, describing the Rechabites of his day,[1] and added that they numbered 60,000.[2] Still more recently, Signor Pierotti, near the southeast end of the Dead Sea, met a tribe who called themselves Rechabites, had a Hebrew Bible, prayed at the tomb of a Jewish Rabbi, and spoke of themselves exactly as the Rechabites in Arabia had spoken to Wolff a generation before.[3]

[1] Jer. xxxv. 5-11.
[2] *Wolff's Journal*, 1829, vol. ii. p. 334.
[3] *Transactions of the British Association*, 1862.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE PROPHET HABAKKUK.

While Jeremiah was contending with the evil around him, other prophets were not silent. If Judah were to fall, its ruin would come in spite of efforts to save it, unique in the history of the world. We look in vain in the history of Greece or Rome, or any people of the ancient or modern world, for such a phenomenon as the preachers who, under the name of prophets, rose during the decay of the two Hebrew kingdoms. Amidst the growing darkness their voices are heard unceasingly calling men back to the light; rebuking sin with a fearless courage; presenting the mighty truths of righteousness and judgment to their countrymen with a force and variety of language which makes their words for ever weighty; realizing the existence and living interest of God in all the concerns of nations and individuals as it never has been done by any other religious order, and anticipating with sublime trust the final victory of truth, and the ultimate emergence of a deathless kingdom of righteousness and peace.

Among these the prophet Habakkuk took a foremost place, though only a brief illustration of his teaching survives. His name, as Luther well puts it, speaks of one "who took his nation to his heart,[1] comforted it and held it up, as one embraces and presses to his bosom a poor

[1] It means "embracing," or "the embracer."

weeping child, calming and consoling it with good hope—if God so will." He seems to have been a Levite, and to have taken part, at the temple service, in the chanting of psalms written by himself.[1] Like Jeremiah and Ezekiel, he thus united the priestly and prophetic offices, at least in a measure. The prophecies bearing his name seem to have been uttered about the year B.C. 604,[2] when Necho had been defeated at Carchemish, and the advance of Nebuchadnezzar on Palestine, to drive the Egyptians finally out of Asia, was imminent. He dwells with profound alarm on the terrors of his approach, realizing the miseries he would inflict on the land, but is too absorbed by higher thoughts to do more than allude in general terms to the historical facts of the hour. His soul is engrossed with the weighty reflections suggested by things around, more than with outward affairs. The deepening wickedness of the age, its contrast of prosperous guilt and suffering worth, had raised doubts and perplexities in his soul, as in the minds of others, as to the ways of God with man. To solve the problem for his fellow-countrymen still faithful to Jehovah, is the great aim of his book. The old doctrine of rewards and punishments in this life he finds untenable, and, first of all the sacred writers, realizes the great truth of New Testament doctrine, that the just shall live by his faith—that is, by his loving trust in God—and not by merely formal works.[3] In style and genius he ranks among the highest of the Hebrew poets, though his strains are no longer those of the sacred lyrics of earlier days, but swell, as it were, to a trumpet blast, under the mightier impulse of stormy times.

[1] Hab. iii. 1–19. Inscription to Bel and the Dragon. [2] Schrader, *Bib. Lex.*
[3] Hab. ii. 4, quoted in Rom. i. 17; Gal. iii. 11; Heb. x. 38.

The book opens with a troubled but confiding cry to Jehovah for light, as to His ways with men. How is it that violence and wickedness prosper, while the innocent poor and the godly were wronged and oppressed?

"I. 2. How long, O Jehovah,[1] shall I cry and Thou wilt not hear? How long shall I cry to Thee for (the) violence (of men), and Thou wilt not help? 3. Why lettest Thou me see iniquity? Why dost Thou Thyself look upon undeserved sorrow? Violence and wrong are before me: strife is around: contention lifts itself up. 4. Through all this the Law[2] has lost its power,[3] and justice never prevails.[4] For the wicked hem round the upright (and keep them back from their due), and only perverted justice is decreed."[5]

The answer, solving the prophet's difficulties, is given by Jehovah. The wicked may have flourished for a time, but their day is coming! The Chaldæans will execute the Divine judgments on them.

"5. Look among the nations, and take notice, and wonder with great astonishment! For a work is being wrought in your days, which ye would not credit if it were told you!

"6. For lo, I raise up the Chaldæans, the fierce and impetuous nation, who push to far countries of the earth, to seize lands that are not theirs! 7. They are dreadful and terrible: their ruler acts as it pleases himself: he follows his own counsel alone.[6] 8. Their horses are swifter than leopards,[7] fiercer than evening wolves;[8] their cavalry[9] bound onwards, coming from afar; they fly like the eagle,[10] hastening

[1] Hab. i. 2-8.

[2] The Torah.

[3] Literally, is "benumbed," "grown cold." It should be the life of the individual and the nation, but it is paralyzed.

[4] Literally, "comes forward" (to the front).

[5] Literally, "goes forth"—is promulgated by the judges.

[6] Slightly paraphrased to give the sense.

[7] The Hebrew word is *namair*; the Assyrian word for leopard is *nimru*, and the local name in Mesopotamia is *nimer*. Houghton, *Trans. Bib. Arch. Soc.*, vol. v. p. 326.

[8] See page 161.

[9] In contrast to their chariot horses. For a description of the war horses of the Assyrian sculptures, see Layard's *Nineveh and Babylon*, vol. ii. p. 360.

[10] In Riehm, p. 27, it is suggested that an eagle-like vulture is meant.

to devour. 9. They come, all of them, only as fierce oppressors; the striving of their faces is forwards;[1] they gather captives like the sand (for number); 10. they scoff at kings and hold princes in scorn; they laugh at all strongholds, and cast up mounds of earth (against them) and take them! 11. Their king rushes by them like a storm, and passes on resistless, and it becomes a sin; for this, his great might, is made by him, his god."[2]

The thought that even the Chaldæans are powerless before Jehovah, calms the mind of the prophet, as the miseries they will inflict on his people rise before him. They, too, will be judged. God cannot permit their violence to go unvisited. They are only the instruments of Providence, unconsciously fulfilling its purpose. That accomplished, they will feel the hand of the Almighty. Judah will not utterly perish.

"12. Art Thou not from everlasting, O Jehovah, my God, my Holy One! We shall not die![3] O Jehovah, Thou hast appointed them (the Chaldæans) to execute Thy judgments. O Rock[4] of Israel, Thou hast ordained them to chastise (Thy people)!

"13. Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on wrong. Why, then, lookest Thou calmly on these robber[5] (Chaldæans)? Why art Thou silent when the Wicked One swallows up men more righteous than he? 14. Why makest Thou men as the (helpless) fish of the sea, or as the creeping things that have no ruler? 15. These (plunderers) pull out all men with the hook, draw them in with their casting-net, and gather them with their draw-net,[6] and rejoice and are glad of it. 16. Therefore they make offerings to their cast-

[1] The word translated "cast wind," is, literally, "towards the east," but "the east" meant, originally, "the side before one," and seems to have that sense here. **Hab. i. 9-16.**

[2] Ewald: "His mind is lifted up and passes due bounds, and he becomes guilty." The reading in the text is that of Steiner, Keil, Klein, Delitzsch, and Pusey.

[3] Steiner, Keil, Eichhorn, Ewald and some others adopt the reading, "Thou shalt not die," from the Masoretic notes, which speak of "We shall not die," as "a correction of the Scribes." There are eighteen of these, but they are only suggested in the Hebrew notes, not introduced into the text, and represent only so many Jewish traditions.

[4] Deut. xxxi. 4, 15, 18, 37. Keil. Steiner. Ewald. Hebrew text.

[5] Steiner. [6] Drake, art. "Fish," *Dict. of the Bible.*

ing-net, and burn incense to their draw-net, for through them their catch is rich and their food dainty.[1] 17. Shall they, then, empty out their net, and for ever slaughter the nations (without pity) ?"

This, assuredly, cannot be, since Jehovah reigns! The prophet feels that he must rise above such doubts and half-despairings, and trust to receive a sufficient answer to his perplexities. Lonely heights seemed then, as now, fitter than the haunts of men for communion with God; the heavens, the dwelling of the Eternal, opening from their silent tops, and the ear catching the voice of God, without distraction, amidst the stillness. Habakkuk, therefore, in thought, ascends some such watch-tower of the soul, and waits there amidst the quiet, till God deigns to reveal Himself and shed light on his darkness.

"II. 1. I will take my stand upon my place of watch, and set myself on the tower, and fix my thoughts to hear what Jehovah will say to me; what answer I shall receive to my appeal![2]

"2. Then Jehovah answered me (by a vision) and said: 'Write out the vision, and make it plain on the tablets, that man may read it quickly.[3] 3. For it has respect to a set time, still future, and hastens towards the end, and will not deceive. Though it tarry, wait for it for come it will, and will not miss its time.'"

The oracle itself now begins.

"4. Behold! the soul (of the Chaldæan king) is lifted up; it is not humble[4] in him. But the righteous shall live by his faith.[5] 5. Still more; the proud man (the Chaldæan king), drunk with ambition, is fierce, like one drunk with wine, and rests not in his own land, but opens his jaws like hell, and is like death, and is not satisfied, but gathers to himself all the nations, and draws to him all the peoples.

[1] Literally, "fat." **Hab. i. 17-ii. 5.** [2] Steiner.

[3] Literally, "that he that readeth it may run over it quickly."

[4] Does not flow evenly. Steiner.

[5] The word here translated "faith," is rendered elsewhere "truth," "faithfulness." See Deut. xxxii. 4, a God of *truth;* so Ps. xxxiii. 4; Jer. v. 1, 3; 1 Sam. xxvi. 23. His *faithfulness;* so Ps. xxxvi. 5; xl. 10; Lam. iii. 23. For the full meaning of the word see Rom. i. 17; Gal. iii. 11; Heb. x. 38.

"6. Will[1] not all these nations and peoples take up the song against him, the song of reproach and derision, and say:

"Woe to him that heaps up what is not his! How long will he go unpunished? Woe to him that loads himself (like a usurer) with (the goods of many lands—goods taken in pledge)—thick clay (call them, that must be restored).[2] 7. Shall not (thy creditors) suddenly rise to sting thee;[3] thy tormentors roughly wake thee up, and make thee their prey? 8. Because thou hast plundered many nations, all that remain of them will plunder thee, for the blood of men thou hast shed, and for thy violence to land and city and all their inhabitants!

"9. Woe to him (the Chaldæan) who gathers unjust gain for his house, to set his nest on high, to save himself from the stroke of fate.[4] 10. Thou hast devised only shame to thy House; thou hast destroyed many nations, and sinned away thine own life![5] 11. For the stone shall cry against thee, out of the wall, and the cross-beam out of the timber-work will answer it![6]

"12. Woe to him that builds up his city with (the) blood (of men, his slaves and captives from many lands), and founds his stronghold in iniquity! 13. Behold! Jehovah of hosts has decreed that these nations (of forced workers) shall labour only for what is to perish with fire (through His judgments), and weary themselves for what will come to nothing![7] 14. For widely as the waters cover (the basin of) the sea, shall the earth be filled with the knowledge of the majesty of Jehovah (in His destruction of Babylon)!

"15. Woe to him (the Chaldæan) who causes his neighbour to drink, pouring out his (glowing) cup to him[8] and makes him drunk—to look on his shame! 16. Thou, thyself, wilt be filled with shame, in place of thy (present) glory. 'Drink thou, also' (it will be said to thee), 'and shew thy nakedness!' For the cup in the right hand of

[1] Hab. ii. 6-16.

[2] The figure is taken from a heartless extortioner, who carries off the goods of his debtors in pledge. The word for pledges is *Abtt*, and this, divided in two, means thick clay, or masses, clods of clay. No doubt a verbal play was intended.

[3] The figure is from the bite or sting of a serpent.

[4] Literally, "grasp of evil."

[5] Brought on thine own future destruction.

[6] This paragraph is applied by Steiner and Ewald to Jehoiakim, but their reasons are unsatisfactory, and the interruption to the prophecy against Chaldæa is improbable. [7] Eichhorn. De Wette. Noyes. Ewald.

[8] Literally, "thy wrath, or heat." It may mean the glow of the wine, as heating or intoxicating, or the secret enmity with which the Chaldæan, under fair pretences, brought nations to drunken slavery, by ruinous alliance, etc.; or it may refer simply to the notorious drunkenness and revelling of Babylon.

Jehovah will turn itself to thee, and foul vomit shall cover thy glory ![1]
17. For violence (like that) done to Lebanon (in ruthlessly hewing down its woods) shall cover thine own land,[2] and the slaughter of its beasts (like that which thou wroughtest in Israel) shall make thee afraid.[3] (Thy land shall be desolate,) for the blood of men thou hast shed, and for the violence thou hast shewn to town and country, and all their inhabitants."[4]

The trust of the Chaldæans in their idols is vain.

"18. What profit is the graven image, when its maker has carved it? Or the molten image, which teaches but lies—that the maker of such dumb idols should trust in them?

"19. Woe to him that says to the piece of wood, 'Wake up!' and to the dead[5] stone, 'Rouse thyself!' Can it teach? Behold, it is plated over with gold and silver, and there is no breath in its midst!

"20. But Jehovah dwells in His holy temple[6] (in the heavens): let all the earth be silent before Him!"

The prophet has now ended his predictions, and closes by a sublime prayer to God to preserve Judah, during the trials before her at the hands of the Chaldæans, and restore her when the term of her captivity is ended. He throws his supplication into the form of a psalm, to be sung in the temple to dithyrambic music; that is, to strains of the highest emotion.[7] Since God will assuredly visit His people in wrath, let Him still remember His mercy. He delivered them of old from Egypt; He can now deliver them from Babylon, when the seventy years of their captivity are ended.

[1] Or, "shame and disgrace will take the place of thy glory." Ewald. **Hab. ii. 17-20.**

[2] Literally, "cover thee."

[3] Septuagint. Ewald, virtually. Cook. Targum. Pesh. Jerome.

[4] Eichhorn.

[5] Literally, "dumb."

[6] Literally, "palace."

[7] *Shigionoth*, pl. of *Shiggion*, comes from the verb *Shagah*, "to reel about through drink." It occurs only one other time, in Ps. vii., title.

"III. 2. O Jehovah, I have heard Thy words (against Judah and Babylon), and tremble! O Jehovah, revive[1] Thy work (of mercy to Thy people), as the years roll their course; as the years pass make it known to us; in Thy (just) wrath remember mercy!"

That He will do so is sure, from the remembrance of His former deeds to His people. Hereafter He will come from Sinai, His ancient resting-place, as He did of old.

"3. Eloah comes from Teman,[2] and the Holy One from the mountains of Paran.[3] His brightness (as of the sun) covers the heavens, and the earth is filled with His glory.[4] 4. Splendour, like the sun, appears; beams of light stream forth around Him,[5] the veil of His almighty power! 5. Before Him goes the Pestilence; the burning Plague follows in His steps[6] (for He comes to judge His enemies). 6. He stands, and the earth shakes beneath Him; He looks around, and the nations tremble. The everlasting mountains burst asunder; the world-old hills sink down.[7] He comes along His ancient paths[8] (the paths in which he marched from Sinai, of old)!"

The prophet sees Jehovah coming at the head of His people, from Egypt; His anger roused against the rivers and the sea which hinder their escape. He advances like a warrior, with His chariots and bow, against them, and they yield and open, to make a pathway for Israel.

[1] Literally, "let it come to life." **Hab. iii. 2–6.**

[2] In southern Idumea. It stands for Edom as a whole.

[3] Paran, the hills forming the eastern half of the upland wilderness of Et Tih. They are divided from Teman only by the low plain of the Arabah. The word "Selah" is thought by Hitzig to mean that the people bowed down at this point. Keil supposes it is equivalent to *Forte*, and introduced an outburst of trumpets, etc. Teman and Paran lay between Judah and Sinai, from which God is supposed to come, as of old. See Judg. v. 4, and Deut. xxxiii. 2, from which the verse is in effect borrowed. Sinai, to the Jew, was the ancient seat of the earthly majesty of God, as seen at the giving of the Law.

[4] Literally, "praise."

[5] At His side.

[6] This seems a more strict parallel than "lightnings fly forth at His feet." De Wette. Ewald renders the words "burning Plague" by "flames of death."

[7] Judg. v. 5.

[8] He came of old from Sinai; so now.

"7. I see the tents of Cushan [1] troubled ; the tent coverings of the land of Midian tremble ! 8. Does Thy wrath burn against the streams, O Jehovah ? or against the swelling waves of the sea—that Thou ridest on with Thy horses, Thy chariots of victory ?[2] 9. Thy bow is made bare and levelled ;[3] Thine arrows are satiated—victory is won ![4] The streams of water (fleeing back before Thee) tear open the earth. 10. The mountains see Thee and tremble : the storm of waters pours on ; the deep utters its voice (in supplication to Thee), and lifts up its hands (to implore Thy grace) ! 11. The sun and the moon draw back into their habitation, at the light of Thy flashing arrows ; at the shining of Thy glittering spear ! "

The prophet now describes the judgment of God on the nations, to bring about the deliverance of His people.

"12. Thou marchest through the earth in wrath ; thou tramplest the nations under foot (like grain on the threshing floor [5]) in Thine anger. 13. Thou goest forth for the deliverance of Thy people ; the deliverance of Thine anointed ! Thou dashest in pieces Pharaoh, the head of the house of the wicked, laying bare the foundations of the deep,[6] to destroy him. 14. Thou hast pierced through with their own spears the head of their princes,[7] who rushed on like a whirlwind to scatter us, and rejoiced (at the thought of) devouring the helpless, (as robbers bursting on their prey) from their lurking place. 15. Thou hast marched through the sea with Thine horses—through the heaped up (walls of) great waters."

This appearance of God, of old, to lead forth His people and judge their enemies, was the earnest of His return to deliver them from the impending captivity. Fear and trembling seized the prophet at the thought of the misery

[1] Ethiopia, which extended over Arabia and the Soudan. **Hab. iii. 7-15.**

[2] Literally, "deliverance." The streams and the sea lay between Israel and liberty.

[3] De Wette.

[4] There are more than a hundred explanations of this very corrupt clause. I adopt the conjecture of De Wette.

[5] The verb refers to the threshing of grain by trampling it under the feet of cattle.

[6] A. V. "unto the neck"—a periphrasis, to mark the depth of the waters.

[7] Ewald. Leaders, De Wette. Hordes, Keil. Warriors, Steiner.

before his countrymen, but this passes into a peaceful joy in the sure anticipation of their ultimate deliverance.

"16. When I heard (that God would appear to punish the sins of my nation), my body shuddered ; my lips quivered at (the sound of) the (Divine) voice ; terror[1] struck through my bones, my limbs trembled beneath me, lest I should not have strength to await the day of trouble, when the foe comes up against my people. 17. For the fig-tree will not blossom, and there will be no fruit in the vines ; the harvest of the olive will fail, and the fields yield no food ; the flock will be gone from the fold, and there will be no beast in the stalls.[2] 18. Yet, as for me, I will rejoice in Jehovah : I will be glad in the God of my salvation ! 19. For Jehovah, the Lord, is my strength, and makes my feet like the feet of the (bounding) hinds, and He makes me walk on my high places.[3] (He lifts me up above fear, and fills me with joyful confidence !)" [4]

Jeremiah had enjoyed liberty of speech during the first years of Jehoiakim, though amidst much scorn and opposition. He was now, however, to find himself not only precluded, for a lengthened period, from appearing in public, but forced to seek personal safety in concealment. He had exercised his prophetical office for nearly a quarter of a century, and must thus have been about forty-five years of age, having entered on his commission when a very young man. Difficulties had accumulated in his way in the last months. He still bore the marks of the bastinado, and he had been cramped in the five-holed stocks through an entire night. The people had even clamoured for his death. A change in his relations to them was necessary. He had to prepare for the worst.

[1] Literally, "rottenness." **Hab. iii. 16-19.**

[2] The verbs are in the present, throughout, but this in the sense of a prophetic vision of what will be in the time of the invasion.

[3] 2 Sam. ii. 18 ; xxii. 34. Ps. xviii. 33.

[4] The book closes with the note, "To the chief singer ; to be sung to the accompaniment of my stringed instruments." The prophet was not only a Levite, but also one of the temple musicians.

The defeat of Egypt, at Carchemish, left Jehoiakim, for the moment, virtually free. Babylon was far off, Pharaoh was crippled, and the smaller states might be successfully resisted. It seemed as if Judah might once more aspire to independence. But this dream was short-lived. The army of Nebuchadnezzar was advancing. The neighing of its war-horses might almost be heard from Dan, at the foot of Hermon; the noise of its camp seemed already to make the land tremble.[1] The summons of the conqueror to deliver up Jerusalem, on pain of its destruction, might be expected daily. Egypt, indeed, was profuse in its exhortations to resist, but was it able to help? In the approaching struggle between it and Nebuchadnezzar, Palestine was certain to be the battle-ground, as it had been under Hezekiah. Jehoiakim and his people were alike irresolute what course to take.

Jeremiah, and those around him, alone were clear and firm in their views. The doom pronounced on the land by God would inevitably visit it, unless warded off by earnest and general repentance. Nothing else would prevent the deportation of Judah to Babylon; and, in any case, subjection to Nebuchadnezzar was at hand. All this had been urged again and again, but the people had turned a deaf ear to it. The prophet felt that, at any moment, they might turn against him and put him to death, or he might be slain, like the prophet Urijah, by royal order,[2] and, if so, his words would perish. He therefore determined to write out such of his addresses, from the opening of his ministry, as seemed specially to demand preservation.[3] In this purpose he could count on the help of Baruch, "the Blessed," a faithful friend, who clung to him in all his

[1] Jer. viii. 16. [2] Jer. xxvi. 23. [3] Jer. xxxvi. 1, ff.

troubles, like Elisha to Elijah, or Timothy to St. Paul. He was a man of noble family—brother of Seraiah, who afterwards held high office under King Zedekiah[1]—and was specially skilled in the laborious art of manuscript writing, then, undoubtedly, a comparatively rare accomplishment. A roll, in all probability of prepared skin,[2] having therefore been procured, the prophet dictated to this trusty friend "all the words of Jehovah, which He had spoken to him," and he took them down, column by column, as uttered, till the whole had been written out.

The difficulty now was to have them read aloud, if, perchance, at last, his countrymen might prove more teachable than in the past. Jeremiah himself could not venture to go into the temple,[3] but there was no such animosity felt towards Baruch. The excitement and danger of the last few months, however, had unnerved even one so faithful. When asked to take the roll to the temple court, and read it before the crowd, he shrank from the peril. "Woe is me now," cried he, "for Jehovah has added fresh grief to the sorrow I have already. I am weary with sighing and find no rest!" To take so prominent a part would ruin his worldly prospects, and might endanger his life. But Jeremiah would not hear of a refusal. Jehovah, he said, had spoken thus to him:

[1] Jer. li. 59. Bar. i. 1. Jos., *Ant.*, X. ix. 1.

[2] The manuscripts of the Hebrews seem to have been written on the skins of sheep or goats. Writing could be washed out from the material (Num. v. 23), and it could not be torn as papyrus, from Egypt, might have been, but had to be cut. Jer. xxxvi. 23. Parchment in the strict sense was of later invention than Jeremiah's time. The ancient Ionians used the skins of goats and sheep for their writings, and these were still the common material in many countries in the time of Herodotus (Bk. v. § 58). Herodotus lived B.C. 484–c. 400.

[3] Jer. xxxvi. 5. The words rendered "shut up" cannot here mean imprisoned. See ver. 19.

"XLV. 4. Behold,[1] what I built up I destroy, and what I planted I pluck up, and that is, the whole land! 5. Thou seekest what is great for thyself; seek it not. For, lo, I bring evil on all flesh, saith Jehovah, but I give thee thy life for thy share, in all the places whither thou mayest go."

Consoled with this assurance, he at last consented to undertake the perilous duty.

An opportunity ere long offered itself for this last attempt to save the people in their own despite. The agony of fear pervading the land had led to a special fast being called[2] in the month of December, B.C. 604.[3] All the people were summoned to appear in Jerusalem, and implore God to avert the threatened calamity. Popular superstition still trusted in the temple as a Divine protection against any foe.[4] But this was not enough for their alarm. Priest and people, alike veiled in black haircloth mantles, their heads covered with ashes, threw themselves prostrate on the earth;[5] and hoped, by tears and loud cries of sorrow, and numerous sacrifices, to propitiate their offended God.[6] Multitudes crowded to the temple, in wild excitement, and terror for the future. Taking his place where the throng was greatest, in the open hall of Gemariah, the son of Shaphan, the scribe, in the east forecourt, Baruch bravely read aloud the whole ominous contents of the prophetic roll. Its long alternation of threats and promises had probably been heard

[1] **Jer. xlv. 4, 5.**

[2] The only fast day prescribed in the Law was that of the Day of Atonement, in the 7th month (October).

[3] In the 9th month. Kislew = December. **Jer. xxxvi. 9.**

[4] Jer. vii. 4.

[5] See the parallel case in Joel ii. 17.

[6] In Jer. xxxvi. 7, the word translated "present" includes the attitude as that of prostration before God. It is part of the verb "to fall down," "to prostrate one's self."

before, by some present, but they had then paid no attention to them. Now, however, when Nebuchadnezzar's army was hurrying on to the city, they made a deep impression. Jeremiah had foretold, years before, that the Chaldæan would come, and he was now actually approaching; might not the rest of his prophecies also be fulfilled in due time? He had predicted that the king of Babylon would surely destroy them as a nation, if they did not repent. The whole assembly was startled and alarmed. A young man, Micaiah, the son of Baruch's host Gemariah, awed by what he had heard, hastened to the chief secretary's hall in the palace, on Mount Zion, where the princes were at the time gathered, and told them, with eager excitement, what had been read from the roll of the prophet. The recital now, at last, alarmed them also. Men's minds were in such a tension that indifference to the warnings of the prophet was no longer possible. Among those present were Elishama, the chief secretary,[1] in whose hall the princes were assembled; Gemariah, the father of Micaiah; and Elnathan, the son of Achbor, who, by Jehoiakim's orders, had brought back the prophet Urijah from Egypt to Jerusalem, to be put to death. Fear, however, had, for the time, induced moderate counsels, and an order was therefore sent by an attendant, Jehudi, "the Jew,"[2] to Baruch, to come forthwith, bringing with him the prophet's roll. Instantly obeying, he was invited to sit down, for Eastern teachers sit as they speak, and read it once more, aloud. But the words only confirmed Micaiah's report,

[1] Graetz calls him the adjutant general of the army; that is, the officer in charge of the rolls of the forces. *Geschichte*, vol. ii. p. 351.

[2] In Jer. xxxvi. 14, Jehudi's great-grandfather's name is given as "Cushi" = the Ethiopian. Hence, probably, the distinctive name "Jehudi," the Jew, to mark desire of full identification with Israel.

and intensified the previous excitement, till a visible shudder ran through the hearers.[1] For the moment even the most stubborn among them were awed into alarm. The roll must clearly be brought before the king, and read to him also. Possibly he, too, might at last be aroused, and induced to follow the advice of Jeremiah, by peaceably yielding to Nebuchadnezzar. He might, even, turn penitently to God, and institute religious reforms, as Josiah had done when he heard the Book of the Law. But they knew his cruel, despotic nature, and warned Baruch to go, forthwith, to Jeremiah, and with him flee into safe hiding for the time. This done, they went to the king's private apartments in the warmly built winter chambers, in the inner court of the palace, leaving the roll behind them in the chief secretary's rooms. The weather was chilly, and a brazier, in the centre of the floor, as is still the custom of the East, sent up a welcome glow, in the pleasant warmth of which the king was reclining.

A verbal statement of the contents of the roll sufficed to banish any hope of its affecting Jehoiakim favourably. It must be brought and read to him. He would hear the very words Jeremiah had dared to say against him and his rule. Jehudi therefore brought it, and proceeded forthwith to read it, for a third time, aloud. But a few columns were enough to rouse the lawless and stormy temper of the king. Snatching the book from the hands of the reader, and demanding from Elishama[2] his scribe's knife, he deliberately proceeded to cut the huge roll into slips, which he threw, successively, on the burning char-

[1] So in the Hebrew. Jer. xxxvi. 16.

[2] The knife was a scribe's knife. I have assumed it was that of the chief scribe or secretary, who was present. Scribes used knives for erasures.

coal, till the whole was consumed. In vain Delaiah and Gemariah, and even Elnathan, the accomplice in the king's murder of Urijah, implored him not to burn it. Instead of penitence, there was only defiance. In contrast to Josiah, he shewed no sign and uttered no word of sorrow. The few who had heard the roll in Elishama's rooms might be overwhelmed by its contents, but neither the king nor the circle of attendants[1] round him shewed any alarm, or rent their garments, in token of grief at the awful threatenings. Instead of this, orders were instantly given to arrest both Baruch and Jeremiah, but "Jehovah hid them," and the search was unsuccessful.[2]

Little did Jehoiakim think what he had done. He had rejected the last opportunity of saving his dynasty and his country. The final offer of mercy had been treated with scorn. But his impotent ungodliness had itself foreshadowed the result. The fragments of the roll, as they crackled in the flames, were a forecast of the destruction of his House, his city, and his country. Jeremiah received the news of the sacrilege, in his hiding place, only to reiterate with greater fulness the contents of his prophecies. Taking another roll, he once more dictated to Baruch, not only all the contents of the former one, but also large additions. The fire had consumed the written letter, but it had risen from the ashes in more awful completeness. Nor did Jehoiakim escape a personal message from the secret retreat of the prophet. In the recesses of his palace he learned, we know not how, that Jehovah had instructed Jeremiah to say to him :

[1] Hebrew, servants.

[2] The persons ordered to arrest the prophet and Baruch, were Jerahmeel, "a son of the king," that is, a royal prince; Seraiah (certainly not Seraiah the brother of Baruch), and Shelemiah—not he of that name mentioned in chap. xxxvii. 13.

"XXXVI. 29. Thus says Jehovah.[1] Thou hast (indeed) burned this roll, saying, 'Why have you written in it, that the king of Babylon will certainly come and destroy this land, and destroy man and beast from it?' 30. Therefore, thus says Jehovah, of thee, Jehoiakim, king of Judah: He shall have no son to sit on the throne of David, and his dead body will be cast out (to lie, unburied) in the heat by day, and the frost by night. 31. And I will punish him, his seed, and his servants for their iniquity, and bring on them, and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and on the men of Judah, all the evil I have spoken against them; to which they would not give ear."

Nor did he confine himself to this general denunciation. The character and life of the king were held up to popular condemnation. The tyranny and harshness shewn in the building of his great palace, were fiercely attacked.

"XXII. 13. Woe (cried the prophet), to him (that is, Jehoiakim) who builds his house by unrighteousness,[2] and his halls by wrong; who makes his neighbour work for nothing, giving him no wages for his labour; 14. who says, 'I will build me a great house with wide halls,' and cuts out many windows in them, and wainscots it with cedar, and paints it with vermilion! 15. Do you think you will reign (long) because you vie with Ahab[3] as to your cedar work? Did not your father enjoy his life,[4] and yet he practised justice and uprightness? Then, it went well with him. 16. He gave justice to the poor and needy, and he prospered. Is that not what I mean, by 'knowing Me,' says Jehovah? 17. But your eyes and heart are turned to nothing but your covetousness, and to shed innocent blood, and to oppression and violence. 18. Therefore, says Jehovah, of Jehoiakim, son of Josiah, king of Judah: No one will raise the lament for him (when he dies), 'Ah, my brother!' or 'Ah, sister!' There will be no lamentation for him, 'Ah, my lord!' or, 'Ah, his glory!' 19. He shall be buried with the burial of an ass; drawn out from Jerusalem, and cast down far from its gates!"

With such feelings to the king, and after such utterances respecting him, it is little wonder that we hear no more of Jeremiah till the next reign begins.

[1] Jer. xxxvi. 29-31.
[2] Jer. xxii. 13-19.
[3] Septuagint. Ewald.
[4] Literally, "eat and drink."

The incidents of the great fast day had excited intense feeling, which the audacious impiety of Jehoiakim must have deepened. A division of opinion had been created even in the royal council; some, henceforth, urging submission to Nebuchadnezzar, in obedience to Jeremiah's warnings. The king could not, in such a state of affairs, carry out his mad purpose of defying Babylon, and was forced to make submission, and become its vassal, pledging himself, we may take for granted, to furnish a contingent to the Babylonian army, and discharge all other duties of a dependent. On these conditions he retained his throne. The prophet could once more appear in public; but henceforth, till after Jehoiakim's death, he seems to have refrained from addressing the people. His written prophecies might be left to do their work. Judah had rejected him, and its day of mercy was now past. The princes, whom his words had impressed, stood between him and the fury of the crown, and it is quite possible that even at this time the Babylonians had learned how zealously he had counselled submission to them, and had taken him under their protection.

But Jehoiakim was not a man to make the best of the inevitable. The Chaldæan vassalage pressed so heavily on him, that that of Egypt seemed lighter in comparison. Incitements to rebel were, moreover, constantly urged by the agents of Necho. At last, after three years of forced humiliation,[1] he ventured to raise the standard of revolt, but only to bring down swift ruin on himself and his country. The struggle of Babylon with Egypt was still raging, so that Chaldæan armies were within easy distance, to crush the rebellion at once. Jerusalem was

[1] 2 Kings xxiv. 1.

forced to open its gates to Nebuchadnezzar, and Jehoiakim, after he had been put in chains, saved himself from being carried off to Babylon by renewed abject submission.[1] Heavier terms than before were exacted, and Judah had to bear the supreme indignity of seeing the richest of the sacred vessels carried off from the temple, to adorn the house of the conqueror's god, at Babylon.[2] The SEVENTY YEARS of Judah's bondage had begun.

The remainder of Jehoiakim's reign was increasingly calamitous. Restless and stubborn, he struggled against a position which he could not hope to change for the better, and in his turbulence, brought disaster on the land. Too much engaged to crush him at once, Nebuchadnezzar employed the nations round, who, for the most part, had submitted to the Chaldæans, to assist their detachments on the spot, in harassing Judah, till he himself could come against it. Raids of Syrians, Moabites, and of the B'nai Ammon, therefore, swept up every glen.[3] Hereditary feuds, thus easily gratified, left the country no peace. It seemed like a speckled bird, assailed by all the birds around.[4] Desolation and ruin marked many a hitherto smiling valley.

At last, in B.C. 598, the Great King was once more free to undertake the conquest of Egypt,[5] and marched to it through Palestine, with strong contingents from Moab, Ammon, and Edom—the bitter enemies of Judah. Jerusalem was ere long besieged,[6] but, meanwhile, Jehoiakim died, and thus escaped the rage of his master. A mystery hangs over his death, befitting the gloom and con-

[1] 2 Chron. xxxvi. 6.
[2] Dan. i. 2; v. 2. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 7.
[3] 2 Kings xxiv. 2.
[4] Jer. xii. 7–17.
[5] Lenormant says B.C. 597.
[6] Lenormant, vol. ii. p. 396. Maspero, p. 499.

fusion of the times; one account speaking of him as having fallen in a skirmish with a band of raiders, or in a battle with Nebuchadnezzar, and being left unburied; another as having been murdered in Jerusalem, and cast out on the streets; a third, as having been enticed to Nebuchadnezzar's camp, and there put to death, and left without burial. But, whatever the mode of his death, so bitterly was he hated that no funeral dirge was raised for him,[1] though he was the son of Josiah, and his corpse was left thrown out, like that of a dead ass, on the waste land outside the gates of Jerusalem, in the sun by day, and the frost by night. Ultimately, indeed, if we may trust the Septuagint, his dishonoured body was rescued from this last shame, and interred alongside Josiah and Manasseh, in their tomb in the garden of Uzzah, which was connected, apparently, with the royal stronghold on Ophel.[2] But men whispered that on the dried skin of the corpse, as it lay naked before all, the name of the demon, Codonazer, to whom he had sold himself, appeared stamped in clear Hebrew letters.[3]

[1] Jer. xxii. 18, 19; xxxvi. 30. [2] Böttcher, *Aehrenlese*.

[3] Thenius, on 2 Kings xxiv. 6. He traces it to the words in 2 Chron. xxxvi. 8, "that which was found in him," and to Hab. ii. 9, where the words "power," or "grasp of evil," occur.

CHAPTER XVII.

JEHOIACHIN, B.C. 599.[1]

On the death of Jehoiakim, his son Jehoiachin inherited the shadowy dignity of the throne of David. A lad of eighteen, he had learned only too well to imitate his father, and followed the lead of the heathen party implicitly. He was a grandson, moreover, of Elnathan of Jerusalem, who had been base enough to bring the prophet Urijah back from Egypt, to be put to death. With such antecedents little could be expected from the new reign. The queen mother, Nehushta—"brass"[2]—daughter of Elnathan, is specially mentioned, as if she had taken a more than usually prominent part in affairs; though such a relation to the throne always implies a foremost place under Oriental monarchies. But if she did, it mattered little, for her son's power lasted, at most, only a hundred days,[3] and during a large part even of these, Jerusalem was beleaguered by a Chaldæan army.

The intrigues of Egypt and the strain of the Babylonian domination, had kindled a fresh revolt against Nebuchadnezzar, throughout Palestine, Perea, and Phœnicia, and it was imperative that it should be checked, for Pharaoh struggled hard to retain his hold on Asia, and could not be driven out of it while the kings and states of the sea-coast

[1] Lenormant gives the date at B.C. 597. So also Riehm. Schrader and others say B.C. 598.

[2] Perhaps from her radiant brightness.

[3] 2 Chron. xxxvi. 9.

were on his side. But the power of Babylon was overwhelming. All resistance was swept away before it, and Necho had now, at last, to retire behind the torrent El Arish,[1] the ancient boundary of Egypt, at the south of the Negeb. Meanwhile, Nebuchadnezzar, engaged elsewhere, could not himself attack Jerusalem, but sent a strong force to invest it. That it did not at once open its gates, rose, in all probability, from its consciousness of having offended too deeply to hope for pardon. South and north it was cut off from help. The towns of the Negeb were blockaded,[2] and the enemy held the land on the north. Its fall was only a question of time.

The three months of Jehoiachin's reign are memorable for the reappearance of Jeremiah, now freed from the persecutions of Jehoiakim. Fearless as ever, he proclaimed afresh, at every opportunity, that the decay of morality and religion was the true cause of the calamities gathering so darkly over the nation; making no secret of the hopelessness of deliverance from them, but holding out a prospect of forgiveness and restoration to his people in the future, if they heartily repented and sought the God of their fathers. He had been forced, by the violence of Jehoiakim, to keep at a distance from Jerusalem as long as that monarch lived, but the interval had apparently been utilized by two journeys to Babylon, to see for himself the country and people with which the destiny of his nation was soon to be so closely associated. Yet, while thus wandering far from his beloved Judah, his heart was still with her, and her impending fate engrossed his thoughts. Even when constrained to silence, he remained a prophet. A Divine impulse, he tells us, had led him, while yet in

[1] 2 Kings xxiv. 7. [2] Jer. xiii. 19.

Jerusalem, to buy and put on a white linen girdle, the type, in its purity, of all moral worth. He was commanded, however, to wear it continuously, without washing it, even when soiled,[1] a thing abhorrent to Orientals, and doubtless attracting wide attention, especially in one whose acts were so often symbolical. He did so, therefore, till his townsmen universally noticed it; but when it had thus become a subject of general remark, he was ordered to make a journey to the far-distant river Euphrates,[2] and hide it there in a cleft of the rocks, bordering the stream in parts of its course. Anxious, perhaps, to see Chaldæa, he had fulfilled the Divine injunction at once, strange as it may have seemed to him, and, after staying a time in the country, returned to Palestine. Ere long, however, a second monition came, requiring him to retrace his steps to the Euphrates and dig out the girdle he had thus secreted, and this also he did; only, however, to find it, as might have been expected, rotten and useless.

There could not have been a more vivid emblem of the fate in store for his nation, and, bringing it back with him as such, he now reappeared in Jerusalem. As the girdle is bound round a man, Jehovah had bound Israel to Him by special covenant and adoption, but its long unfaithfulness had made it foul and offensive. Burial for seventy years, in captivity, on the far-distant Euphrates was decreed; it

[1] Jer. xiii. 1–7.

[2] Graetz and Hitzig think that instead of Ph'rath, the Euphrates, we should read Ephrath=Bethlehem. Jeremiah might have gone twice to the Euphrates during the long period of his forced retirement from public activity under Jehoiakim, but Graetz urges that the force of the symbol would be greater if the whole act was carried out under the eyes of the people. Yet the Euphrates was to be the place of banishment, and the lessons might well be specially connected with the fact. The central parts of the great river were about 500 miles from Judah. From the mention of a long lapse of time between the burial of the girdle and its exhumation, it is moreover likely that the Euphrates is really intended. Travelling seems to have been perfectly safe.

was to be carried off and hidden from the world, and destroyed as a state. As such it would perish, like the linen girdle.

"XIII. 9. After this manner,—said he,[1] holding up the once white but now worthless sash, before his fellow-citizens, and speaking in the name of God,—will I (Jehovah) destroy the pride of Judah, and the great pride of Jerusalem! 10. This evil people, who refuse to hear My words, who walk in the stubbornness of their own heart, and follow other gods, to serve and worship them, shall become like this girdle, which is good for nothing! 11. For as, when in use, a girdle cleaves to a man's loins, so I (as it were) bound to Me the whole House of Israel and the whole House of Judah (and made them like a girdle to Me), says Jehovah, that they might be a people, and a name, and a praise, and a glory to Me. But they would not hear!

"12. Speak, therefore, this word to them: Thus says Jehovah the God of Israel, 'Every wine-skin is wont to be filled with wine.' And when they say to thee, 'Do we not know that every wine-skin is wont to be filled with wine? (what do you mean?)' 13. Then thou shalt answer them: Thus says Jehovah, I will fill all the inhabitants of this land—the kings that sit on the throne of David, the priests, the prophets, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, with (the) drunkenness (of despair)! 14. And I will dash them one against the other, even the (very) father and sons, says Jehovah; I will not pity, or spare, or have mercy, but will destroy them!"

Having delivered this message from God, he speaks in his own name.

"15. Hear, and mark ye! Be not haughty, for Jehovah has spoken! 16. Give glory to Jehovah, your God (by confessing your sins),[2] before He cause darkness; before your feet stumble on the dark mountains;[3] before He deepens the gloom into the blackness of death; yea, makes the darkness utter while you in vain wait for light! 17. But if ye will not hear this, my soul shall weep in secret at your pride, and my eye run down with a flood of tears, because Jehovah's flock is carried away captive."

[1] **Jer. xiii. 9-17.**

[2] Josh. vii. 19. Mal. ii. 2. St. John ix. 24. "Give God the praise" "admit that you are deceiving us." [3] Literally, "the mountains of twilight."

But the voice of God again intervenes,[1] bidding him deliver another message.

"18. Say to the king, Jehoiachin, and to the queen mother, 'Humble yourselves and sit down (in the dust,[2] in lamentation); for the crown of your glory sinks (from your heads).' 19. The cities of the Negeb (the south country) are shut up, and no one can relieve[3] them. All Judah is carried off captive; it is carried off wholly! 20. Lift up your eyes (O Zion), and see the enemy that comes from the North! Where is the flock that was given thee, thy beautiful flock (of towns and villages! Lost to the foe!) 21. But what wilt thou say when Jehovah shall set those over thee as captains and as rulers, to gain whose favour thou hast turned aside from Me?[4] Shall not sorrows take thee, as a woman in travail?

"22. And if thou (Zion) say in thine heart, 'Why has this lot befallen me?' It is because thy guilt is so great that thy skirts are to be cut short[5] (like a slave's), and thy feet made sore[6] (with the roughness of the way, as thou art led off captive)! 23. Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Only (by as great a miracle) couldst thou do right; accustomed as thou art to do wrong!

"24. I will, therefore, scatter them, like the broken straw[7] of the threshing floor, that flies before the wind of the desert. 25. This is thy lot; the portion thrown into thy lap[8] from Me, says Jehovah! Because thou hast forgotten Me and hast trusted in lies! 26. For this cause I will (give thee to slavery); cutting short thy skirts before thy face—that thy shame may be seen. 27. I have seen thy adulteries; thy lewd stallion-like neighings; the hatefulness of thy impurity;

[1] Jer. xiii. 18-27.

[2] Literally, "make low, sit down" = sit down in the lowest place.

[3] Literally, "open."

[4] Literally, "those to whom thou hast used thyself as thy trusted ones." The allusion is to the kings of Egypt and Babylon. There is a covert reference to the spiritual adultery of Judah with heathen rulers.

[5] Literally, "uncovered." A slave was bare-legged; free men wore flowing robes.

[6] Literally, "treated with violence."

[7] Hebrew, *Kash*. It includes also the chaff.

[8] Literally, "into thy *mad*" or outer garment. The loose fulness of the Eastern blouse, or tunic, as we may call it, above the girdle, makes a capacious pocket in which men carry grain St. (Luke vi. 38; St. Matt. vii. 2; St. Mark iv. 24), and women their children; and which both sexes use in many other ways, as the apron is used among Western nations.

thy (heathen) abominations on the hills,[1] in the country round. Woe to thee, O Jerusalem! How long will it yet be before thou become pure!"

The prophet had lamented Josiah, in strains repeated through the land, on each anniversary of the battle in which that hero fell. He had sighed over Jehoahaz, a captive in Egypt, doomed never to return to Judah, but to die, a prisoner, among strangers.[2] He had denounced the crimes and tyranny of Jehoiakim, and predicted his shameful end. He now announced the calamity impending over still another ill-fated king. A fragment of a longer address remains, in which he once more warns his countrymen of the doom awaiting them, and then passes to that pronounced by God on Jehoiachin.

"XXII. 20. Ascend the heights of Lebanon[3] (O daughter of Zion), and shriek aloud (in thy sorrow)! Lift up thy voice from (the peaks of) Bashan! Shriek aloud from the mountains of Abarim![4] For all thy lovers (the peoples who united with thee against the Chaldæans) are destroyed! 21. I spoke to thee in thy prosperity,[5] but thou saidst, 'I will not hear.' This has (indeed) been thy course from thy youth; that thou hast not listened to My voice! 22. (But now,) the east wind (that scorches bare the pastures[6]) shall sweep away thy shepherds—(that is, thy leaders); and thy lovers—(the peoples allied with thee against Chaldæa)—shall go into captivity. Then shalt thou, assuredly,

[1] Literally, "hills in the field."

[2] Jer. xxii. 11, 12.

[3] Jer. xxii. 20-22.

[4] Abarim was a chain of hills in Moab. Nebo was among them.

[5] Plural in Hebrew.

[6] The east wind, in the hot months, becomes the *sirocco* when it blows from the *south-east*. When at its worst it dries the mucous membrane of the air passages, producing catarrh and sore throat; induces great lassitude in those who walk or work in it; headache, as if a cord were bound round the temples; oppression of the chest; burning of the palms of the hands and soles of the feet, quickened pulse, thirst, and even fever. It dries and cracks furniture, loosening the joints of tables and chairs, curling the covers of books and of framed pictures, and *parches vegetation, sometimes withering whole fields of young corn*. Pal. Fund Rep., 1883, p. 16. The enemy is here compared to a sirocco.

be ashamed and confounded, for all thy wickedness! 23. O inhabitant[1] of Lebanon, who makest thy nest among the cedars, how wilt thou sigh when pangs come upon thee, as of a woman in travail!"

Passing on to the coming fate of Jehoiachin, the prophet continues.

"24. As I live, saith Jehovah, though thou, Coniah (called, now, Jehoiachin),[2] the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah, were the royal signet-ring on My right hand, even thence will I pluck thee, 25. and give thee into the hand of them that seek thy life, and into the hand of those whose face thou dreadest—the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, and the hand of the Chaldæans. 26. And I will hurl thee, and thy mother that bare thee, (as a slinger hurls a stone,) into another country, where ye were not born, and there will ye die! 27. But to the land to which they will lift up their soul to return, they never shall come back!

"28. Is, then, this man Coniah—sighs the prophet at a later time, in deep sympathy with the unfortunate youth—a despised earthen vessel (to be shattered and cast out)? Or is he a precious vase, in which, nevertheless, one takes no pleasure? Why then are they hurled away, he, and his seed,[3] and cast into a land which they do not know? 29. O land! land! land! hear the word of Jehovah. 30. Thus says Jehovah, Write this man desolate and forlorn; a father who has no pros-

[1] **Jer. xxii. 23-30.**

[2] Keil notices that Jeremiah omits the "Je" before Coniah, changing the sense from "Jehovah will strengthen," to "Jehovah strengthens," as if denying him hope for the future.

[3] That "his seed" should be carried into captivity with him shews that Jehoiachin was not childless. The word used refers only to the having no one who would perpetuate his honours after him. He was childless so far as his royalty was concerned. In 1 Chron. iii. 17, sons of his are mentioned. See also St. Matt. i. 12. He was succeeded by his uncle Mattaniah—that is, Zedekiah. The word rendered "childless" in the A.V. means, strictly, desolate—forlorn—as one bereaved—hence, it at times means "childless," Gen. xv. 2. Bertheau thinks that seven sons of Jehoiakim are mentioned in 1 Chron. iii. 17, 18. We have no further notice of six of these (if they were his sons), but the seventh, Shealtiel, was the grandfather of Zerubbabel, the prince of the first Jews who returned from exile about B.C. 538. *Die B. der Chronik.*, p. 29. Keil says, Jehoiakim had only two sons—Zedekiah and Assir—of whom the first died childless, and the second had only a daughter. Assir, it may be said, is constantly taken to mean "the captive," as referring to Jehoiachin. I quote this to shew the opposite views held by scholars on this as on many other minute points of biblical criticism. Jehoiachin was eighteen when carried off, but marriages are made very early in the East, and polygamy prevailed in the royal family.

perity in his days. For no man of his race will prosper ! no one of them will sit on the throne of David, or rule, hereafter, in Judah."

It seems wonderful that a preacher who spoke thus of the ruling king, in a small community like Jerusalem, should have been left at liberty; wonderful, indeed, that an almost absolute ruler should not have put him at once to death. It may be, that the friends of the prophet were powerful enough to screen him ; but if Jehoiachin had not had some good qualities, it would assuredly have fared ill with so bold a spirit. What would have been the fate of a preacher who had denounced any of our own kings in even very much milder terms ?

The fierce energy of the Chaldæans in the siege, speedily shewed that the only hope for the citizens lay in the king's unconditional surrender of his person to the enemy, and on this Jehoiachin nobly resolved. Going out in sad procession, through a gate which henceforth bore his name,[1] but was afterwards built up, that no one might pass through the arch that had seen so great a humiliation ; he and the queen mother, with their attendants, and the nobles and court officials, presented themselves before the enemy, sitting down,[2] like mourners, on the ground, clad no doubt in black, their faces covered with their mantles,[3] to await their doom. The incident was never forgotten. Writing after the last fall of Jerusalem, Josephus tells us that as long as the city stood, the anniversary of an event so touching was commemorated in the services of the temple, as a signal instance of self-sacrifice for the public good. Jehoiachin had gone, with his family, men said, into voluntary

[1] Ewald, *Gesch.*, vol. iii. p. 791. [2] Jer. xiii. 18. 2 Kings xxv. 12.

[3] This follows from their assuming the character of mourners by sitting on the earth.

captivity, to save the temple from being destroyed,[1] and we may, also, readily believe, to save the city and its inhabitants.

But his hope of clemency was doomed to disappointment. With all his genius, Nebuchadnezzar was a true Eastern sultan, hard and stern to conquered rebels. No pity was shewn the suppliants. Led at once into the presence of the Great King, who had now arrived before Jerusalem, they were sent as captives to Babylon. But even the banishment of the king and court, with the flower of the nobility, did not seem guarantee enough for the future obedience of a petty state so turbulent as Judah. The royal harem, all the leading men found in Jerusalem, including many priests and prophets,[2] all the princes, 7,000 fighting men, and a crowd of workers in metal, wood, and stone, and of armourers,[3] were swept away, at once to weaken and humble the city, and to transfer skilled labour to the royal service at Babylon.[4] Ten thousand men, in all, were carried off from Jerusalem,[5] and over 3,000 from the country round.[6] The prompt capitulation had saved the city from utter destruction, and the population from being, in great part, put to the sword. But the conqueror did not content himself with the mere deportation of captives. The treasures in the palace were seized, and the temple rifled of most of its precious contents; even the gold still left on its walls

[1] Jos., *Bell. Jud.*, VI. ii. 1. [2] Jer. xxix. 1.

[3] The word means "one who closes," and is usually applied to locksmiths and the like. But the closing the joints of armour, of whatever kind, seems in this case more natural.

[4] Layard thinks that some of the objects of art found in the ruins of Babylon may have been the work of Phœnician or other Syrian captives. *Nineveh*, p. 119. *Babylon*, p. 192. Yet Babylon and Assyria were skilled in metal working, for, among the ruins of Sargon's palace, objects of iron and bronze, such as hooks, rings, chains, pick-axes, hammers, ploughshares, weapons, fragments of chariots, and tools of all sorts, were found. [5] 2 Kings xxiv. 14. [6] Jer. lii. 28.

and gates being rudely hacked off and carried to Babylon.[1]

The shock of such a calamity was terrible. Nearly a hundred and fifty years had passed since the glades beyond the Jordan had resounded with the lamentations of the captives of Gilead, dragged away to Assyria by Tiglath Pileser, and it was over a hundred and twenty years since Sargon had marched back to Nineveh, leading thousands of the people of the western half of the Northern Kingdom into exile. Assyria had fallen within the last few years, and now, itself, lay in ruins as desolate as those of the Hebrew cities it had turned into solitudes. But another power had risen, as fierce and ruthless, and Judah, the last hope of the chosen people, saw its king and its leading citizens swept off in chains to the Euphrates. We live again amidst the agony of the moment, in the outburst of Jeremiah's grief, already quoted. Could it be that the young king was to be cast away like a worthless potsherd ;[2] he who seemed to his people under the special care of Jehovah, their covenant God, as if he had been the royal signet ring on the finger of the Almighty![3] The wild cry of agony seemed to Jeremiah to rise from the top of Lebanon, the hills of Bashan, and the mountains of Moab, as the pale spirit of the land looked down, like a mother robbed of her children, on the long train of her noblest sons—among whom were Ezekiel, and Kish, the great-grandfather of Mordecai[4]—wending away into distant captivity.[5] It may be that in the forty-second and forty-third Psalms we have the lament of one of the exiles, as he took a last look from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermons,

[1] Thenius, and Hebrew. [2] Jer. xxii. 28. [3] Jer. xxii. 24.
[4] Ezek. i. 1; iii. 15. Esth. ii. 5. [5] Jer. xxii. 20.

and the hill Mizar, on the scenes he was leaving for ever.[1]

"XLII. 1. As the hart pants (under the sultry sky) for brooks of water,[2]
So pants my soul after Thee, O God!
2. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God—
When shall I come (back) and appear before God?
3. My tears have been my meat day and night,
While they continually say to me, 'Where is thy God?'
4. My soul overflows with sorrow when I remember it.

"How I used to go up with the multitude (to Jerusalem)!
How I went with bands, in procession, to the House of God!
With the multitude that kept the joyful feast,[3]
Amidst the voice of praise and loud rejoicing!

"5. Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted[4] within me?
Hope[5] thou in God, for I will still praise Him!
He is the health of my countenance, and my God.

"6. O my God, my soul is cast down within me!
Therefore will I remember Thee from the land of Jordan, and from the Hermons, from the hill Mizar.[6]

[1] It is a striking proof of the need for modest diffidence in fixing the dates of the Psalms, to see those which have been assigned by different scholars to the 42d Psalm. Delitzsch thinks it of the time of David. Vaihinger ascribes it to a Levite driven away by Athaliah. Hitzig, to a priest carried off to Syria in the Syrian wars. Olshausen, to the time of Antiochus Epiphanes. Ewald, to Jehoiachin while he rested by night at Hermon, on the way to Babylon. The 42d and 43d Psalms are regarded, by nearly all critics, as having originally been parts of one whole now accidentally divided.

[2] **Ps. xlii. 1–6.** The word translated "brooks" (Aphikim) means any strong body of water, such as the torrents which rush down the wadys after heavy rains. Passing away in a few hours, the only traces of them left are pools here and there. The hart is represented as standing over the dry bed of the torrent, panting for some shady spot where water may still be found.

[3] Among the multitude adorned (for the feast). Septuagint. Bredenkamp, p. 143.

[4] Or, moanest thou. [5] Or, wait on.

[6] "The Hermons" are the eastern chain of Lebanon, from the foot of a spur of which the largest of the three sources of Jordan bursts out, at Banias; the two other sources, also, rising from the melting of the Hermon snows. These mountains are a magnificent spectacle. I crossed them on the way to Damascus. Hermon was called

7. The deep above calls to the deep beneath,[1] at the voice of Thy water-floods ;
All Thy waves and Thy billows have gone over me.
8. But (yet) Jehovah will send forth [2] his loving-kindness to me day by day,
And by night the song to Him will be with me, and my prayer to the God of my life !
9. I will say to God, my Rock, ' Why hast thou forgotten me ?
Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy ?'
10. As with a crushing of my bones, my enemies reproach me;
Daily saying to me, ' Where is thy God ?'

"11. Why art thou cast down, O my soul, why art thou disquieted within me ?
Hope Thou in God, for I shall still praise Him!
He is the health of my countenance, and my God.

" XLIII. 1. Judge me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation;
O deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man !
2. For thou art God, my fortress; why hast Thou cast me off ?
Why go I mourning, because of the oppression of the enemy ?

Sirion by the Sidonians, the word being probably a Turanian name, meaning "white or snowy." The old Amorite name was Shenir, the meaning of which is uncertain. The top is more or less covered with snow, for several months in the year. I crossed underneath the highest peak, in the month of March, and found great patches of snow, in many parts so close together, that, from the lower districts, far away, the sheet of white had appeared unbroken and glorious. There was snow, also, on the level expanse of the old crater just under the highest ridge, which stretches away in awful sublimity to the north. I ate my lunch on the floor of the crater, beside a patch of snow, but the air was deliciously mild. The highest point of this grand mountain must have been sacred from the most remote ages, for there is, on it, an oval of cut stones carefully laid, with ashes inside, as if traces of a beacon or of a sacrificial fire. There is, moreover, a cave close by, hewn in the rock, with a rock pillar bearing up the roof. Mizar — literally, "smallness." Position unknown.

[1] Perhaps the ocean overhead and the ocean around, or, possibly, the sounding waterfalls of the hills have their tumult answered back from their channels beneath. The word translated "deep," means the sea, the abyss from which rivers flow up, or any mass of raging waters. It may be the poet refers to the bursting of a heavy rain-cloud. A tropical rain is amazing in its vehemence. The word for "water-floods" means a rush of waters. In 2 Sam. v. 8, the only other text in which it occurs, it seems to mean a conduit. **Ps. xlii. 7-xlii. 2.**

[2] Literally, "command."

"3. Send forth Thy light and Thy truth! let them lead me,
Let them bring me to Thy holy hill, and to Thy tabernacles,[1]
4. That so I may come to the altar of God,
To God my exceeding joy!
And praise Thee on the harp, O God, my God!

"5. Why art thou cast down, O my soul; and why art thou disquieted within me?
Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise Him,
The health of my countenance, and my God!"

Babylonia, however, was not altogether a strange land to the captives. Numbers of their fellow-countrymen had already been carried thither after the battle of Carchemish, and on the second invasion of Palestine by Nebuchadnezzar, and had been settled at Tel Abib, which may be translated "Cornhill," on the banks of a great canal, the Chebar,[2] connected with the Euphrates, somewhere in Lower Mesopotamia. That men like Daniel and his three companions were among these first bands of exiles, must have softened the regrets of banishment; the fresh prisoners being settled among their brethren carried off before them. Jehoiachin himself was bitterly humbled. Clad in coarse prison garments, he had to bear the miseries and degradation of an Eastern jail—tempered, however, by the company of his wife[3]—till the death of Nebuchadnezzar, thirty-six years later. Not till then was pity shewn him. The new king of that day, Evil Merodach, having no such personal feeling against him as had swayed his father, strove to atone for the long sufferings of the

[1] Or, dwelling-places. **Ps. xliii. 3-5.**

[2] Ezek. i. 3; iii. 15. See Fried. Delitzsch, *Wo lag das Paradies?* p. 47. Schrader, art. "Ezekiel," in *Bib. Lex.* There were at least thirty-five broad canals, each with a distinctive name. Delitzsch, p. 193. The *Dict. of the Bible* names a special canal, "The Royal," as probably the Chebar. Riehm only speaks of it as some now lost stream or canal of Babylonia.

[3] This follows from his children having been born in Babylon.

unfortunate exile, by setting him free, and entertaining him thenceforward at the royal table, in suitable splendour.[1] Legend has brightened the story of his last days; describing him as living on the Euphrates, in a sumptuous house, surrounded by a spacious paradise, and married to the fairest woman of his day, the chaste Susannah;[2] the companion of the king of Babylon, and the chief personage, and high judge among the captives. It is added, moreover, that amidst all, he was still mindful of his native land, listening, with his brethren, to Baruch, as he read the prophecies before them, and amidst weeping, fasting, and prayer, sending off help to the remnant of his people in Jerusalem.[3] But this touching picture is only a creation of national pride, to adorn with a fictitious prosperity the closing years of the last direct heir to the Jewish crown.

After the deportation of so many of its leading men and its best mechanics, Judah was feeble in the extreme. Yet population enough remained to form the beginning of a state that might ultimately have been prosperous, if it had remained peacefully dependent on Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar evidently intended this, for he left the walls of Jerusalem, and of other strong places like Lachish and Azekah, untouched. The leaders of the troublesome Egyptian party had been carried off, or were thought to have been so, but enough members of the upper classes, favourable to Babylon, had been left, to supply the king with officials and to support the dignity of the throne. It

[1] Jer. lii. 31–34.

[2] Susannah i. 4. The Joiakim of this passage was identified in the early Church with Jehoiachin. Africanus (*Ep. ad Orig.*, Routh's *Rel. Sac.*, vol. ii. p. 113), quoted by Lord Arthur Hervey, *Dict. of the Bible*, vol. i. p. 943.

[3] Baruch i. 3, ff.

rested with Judah itself whether it should continue a nation, by submitting to Nebuchadnezzar, or perish by vain resistance.

Small as it was, the land had a wonderful power of recovering itself after the heaviest blows. The temple, the palaces, and the mansions of the rich, still made Jerusalem proud of its beauty, and it was the centre of a trade that brought great gain to its citizens. The country round, though naturally only bare gray hills, was exceedingly fertile when carefully terraced, and some spots yielded not only olives and fruit, but also grain, as, for example, the valley sloping up towards Bethlehem. The Phœnicians, as has been noticed, year by year exported wheat, date syrup, oil, and balsam,[1] from the richer parts of the small territory of Judah, on the west of Jerusalem, especially, in exchange for their own manufactures, and their imports from every part of the world. Jerusalem as a central post for business, supplied the demands of the various peoples east and south;[2] Phœnician exchangers, settled in it, facilitating commercial transactions.

Various trades and arts, moreover, flourished. There was a guild of masons,[3] to whom the plummet, the measuring line, the compasses, and the square, were as familiar as to us.[4] Sculpture had taken root in Judah, since its contact with Assyria, and metal workers shewed at once their skill and moral laxity by casting idols of all sizes, while gold and silver workers found only too much trade in moulding costly vessels for the luxurious aristocracy,

[1] An export called *Pannag* is also mentioned, Ezek. xxvii. 17, which is rendered "comfits" by Ewald, and "millet" in the Peshito.

[2] Graetz, vol. ii. p. 362.

[3] Masger.

[4] 2 Kings xxiv. 14. Amos vii. 7. Isa. xliv. 13.

and covering the wooden figures of idols with plates of the precious metals,[1] brought through Tyre, from the mines of Spain and India.[2] The mansions of the rich were wainscoted with cedar ; their floors adorned with mosaics,[3] and the roofs and walls set off with bright colours.[4] Yet the bulk of such skilled artificers were now removed to Babylonia.

Nor was high culture wanting. The writings of the prophets and psalmists imply an equal activity in various directions. Like other Orientals, the Hebrews delighted in proverbs, and they had a literature of songs and elegies.[5]

Nor was their social declension without some mitigations. The praise of the virtuous wife, in the Book of Proverbs, shews that, if the king and a few of his nobles practised polygamy, the community, as a rule, were free from it. No picture of a happy home could be more perfect than the ideal painted as that of these long past times. A house-mother in whom the heart of her husband can safely trust, so that he never wants; who does him good and not harm all the days of her life ; whose life is ceaselessly busy with every womanly work and art ; whose household are clothed in scarlet ; whose husband is honoured among his neighbours on her account ; whose children arise and call her blessed,[6] speaks of domestic life of the noblest type as still familiar in some of the homes of Judah.

A people among whom such a conception of woman existed, must, indeed, have had much good in it even in the worst times, for mothers form the characters of their sons. Home is the cradle of the spirit as well as of the body. It

[1] Hos. xiii. 2. Jer. xliv. 19 ; x. 4.
[2] Jer. x. 9.
[3] Maskhit. Graetz, vol. ii. p. 362.
[4] Jer. xxii. 14.
[5] 2 Chron. xxxv. 25.
[6] Prov. xxxi. 10-31.

is natural, therefore, to read that the stony hills and valleys of Judah were often merry with the song and dance. At marriages, and the vintage, and the yearly feasts, flutes, tambourines, and harps made music to the chorus of happy voices. Games were keenly followed by the youth, one especially being noticed by Zechariah [1]—a trial of strength by lifting great weights. Contests of wit were a familiar amusement, as in the days of Samson; the members of a company striving to puzzle each other by riddles, or to shew their smartness in joke or repartee.

Then, however, as now, there was a sharp contrast between the town and the country. The quiet life of the field or garden gave little opportunity for sharpening the faculties, compared with the capital; and the same half-contemptuous sense of this, which has, in our own language, changed the old English name for peasant [2] into the modern "boor," pictured the Jewish Am-ha-aretz, or countryman, as the equivalent of a rude clown.[3] In Jerusalem, moreover, public speaking seems to have been as carefully studied by the upper classes as it was among the Greeks; the popular liberty always cherished among the Hebrews making the arts of persuasion necessary to those who would gain power or public influence.[4] Agitators and schemers could flatter with their tongues, and only too often realized that they could gain their end by dexterous speech more easily than by force.[5]

Since the death of Josiah, the government of Judah had

[1] Zech. xii. 3. Jerome, on the verse, says, of his own day, "The old custom is still preserved in the towns of Palestine and through Judæa, to have in the villages, towns, and towers, round stones of great weight, with which the young men are wont to try their strength, some lifting them to their knees, some to their breasts, some to their shoulders and heads."

[2] "Bauer," still the German word.

[3] The word "clown" itself is "colonus," a cultivator of the soil, a ploughman.

[4] Ps. xii. 4.

[5] Ps. lv. 21.

been virtually an oligarchy. The kings could do little, and, in their fear of a conflict with a powerful aristocracy, gave themselves up to the effeminacy of a life in their harem or to busy idling. Only the nearest relatives, and a few favourites, had the right of entry to the presence.[1] Surrounded by black eunuchs, the successors of David were only nominal kings.[2] Even the kingly prerogative of supreme judge seems to have passed, before the fall of the city, into the hands of the court and the princes;[3] men, who, in not a few cases, had sunk so low as to devote their principal care to the preservation of their personal beauty.[4] It would have needed a strong and vigorous ruler to save the nation from utter ruin, and unfortunately such a man did not fill the throne after Jehoiachin's fall.

[1] 2 Kings xxv. 19. Jer. lii. 25. In the one passage the number of these favourites is five, in the other seven.

[2] 2 Kings xxiv. 15. Jer. xxxviii. 22. 2 Kings xxiii. 11. Jer. xxxiv. 19; xli. 16; xxxviii. 7, etc.

[3] Jer. xxi. 12; xxii. 3; xxvi. 10.

[4] Lam. iv. 7. Where "Nazarites" refers, from the parallel in the next verse, to the princes.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ZEDEKIAH, B.C. 599–588.[1]

KING OF BABYLON.	KINGS OF EGYPT.
NEBUCHADNEZZAR, B.C. 604–562.	PHARAOH NECHO, B.C. 612–596.
	PSAMMETICHUS II., 596–591.[2]
	PHARAOH HOPHRA, 591–572.

IT might have been thought that, after the bitter results of the revolt against Babylon, under Jehoiachin, the ruler who succeeded him would have learned a lesson of quiet submission. But the Chaldæans themselves had done much to stir up future trouble. The flower of the various influential classes had been carried off, though some who escaped the enemy, or were thought friendly to Babylonian vassalage, still remained. The land, however, must have been greatly weakened, since only 4,600 men were thought worth banishing, after the final insurrection.[3] Many of the boldest and most restless spirits had fled to Egypt,[4] in their detestation of Babylon; the ancient and familiar civilization of the Nile valley seeming preferable to the harsh and barbarous rule of the newly risen Chaldæan kingdom. The leaning of the people, generally, was towards dependence on Pharaoh rather than on Nebuchadnezzar, and this boded no good for the future.

Still, the necessities of the position appeared to guarantee peace. The land was exhausted, its towns stripped

[1] 599, Schrader. 598, Riehm. 597, Lenormant and Maspero.
[2] 589, Maspero. [3] Jer. lii. 28–30. [4] Jer. xxiv. 8.

of their fighting population, its resources wasted, its affairs thrown into confusion. Society had to be largely reconstructed, for the poorer classes were now a large majority, and most of the capitalists, statesmen, and substantial citizens were exiles. The framework of the whole community, however, had been left. There were materials for a court; the city and country towns were intact; the soil remained free, and there was population enough to make the kingdom ere long prosperous and happy, if it were contented to be dependent. Nebuchadnezzar's aim in sparing Jerusalem had evidently been to maintain a weak tributary state between himself and Egypt, as an outpost of his empire, and a check on invasion of Asia from the Nile.

After the banishment of Jehoiachin the choice of a successor, by the conqueror, fell on his uncle Mattaniah, "the gift of Jehovah," the third son of Josiah. He was a boy of ten years old when his father fell at Megiddo, and was now in his twenty-first year.[1] His half-brother, Jehoiakim, had been the son of a second wife of his father; but he and Jehoahaz, now an exile in Egypt, were full brothers, the sons of Hamutal, of Libnah, in the western lowlands.[2] Unfortunately, for more than a generation, all the kings had been very young at their accession: Josiah, a child of 8; Jehoahaz, 23; Jehoiakim, 25; Jehoiachin, the nephew of Mattaniah, 18. Instead of such inexperienced rulers, at so perilous a crisis, the helm of state demanded a strong hand and a firm will. Mattaniah, unfortunately, had neither. Rather weak than bad; wanting in foresight,

[1] 2 Kings xxiv. 18. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 11.

[2] 2 Kings xxiii. 31; xxiv. 18. The affection of full brothers was proverbial. They fancied they were closer relations to each other than a son is to a father or mother.

irresolute, without force of will to take and keep his right position as head of the country; anxious to follow the counsels of the prophets, but without the courage to do so; he became the mere sport of factions, and at last was brought by them into ruinous conflict with Babylon, against his own better judgment and convictions. A Charles I. or Louis XVI., when the country needed a Longshanks or Cromwell; he might have ruled well in quieter times, but was unfit for those on which he fell. But the succession was quite regular, for Jehoiachin was as yet childless; his sons being born after he was carried to Babylon.[1]

Counting perhaps on his gentleness of disposition and aversion from war, Nebuchadnezzar, instead of setting up a Chaldæan governor or resident in Jerusalem, appointed Mattaniah to the throne. He took care, however, to require from him a solemn oath by Elohim,[2] that he would be a faithful vassal to Babylon, making no innovations, and forming no league or alliance with Egypt. He was thus bound by every consideration of interest, honour, religion, and gratitude, to be true to the Chaldæan ruler. His two predecessors had been in a very different position. For him, disloyalty *must* bring ruin.

On taking the throne, Mattaniah changed his name to Zedekiah, "the righteousness of Jehovah," as if his first impulse had been to rule in the fear of God, like his illustrious father. The hopes of the prophets seem to have been for the moment revived, for the great name,

[1] 1 Chron. iii. 17. Assir = the captive.

[2] 2 Chron. xxxvi. 13. Ezek. xvii. 13. Jos., *Ant.*, X. vii. 1. 1 Esdras i. 48. Elohim was a general expression for the Divine Being. Nebuchadnezzar did not recognize the power of Jehovah, since he seemed to have prevailed against Him by subduing His people.

Jehovah Tsidkenu—"the Lord our Righteousness"[1]—by which Jeremiah in after years looked forward to the Messiah, appears as if it had been at least suggested by that of a king whose adopted name was so nearly identical.[2] But the gleam of sunshine soon passed away.

To a race like the Jews, proud beyond all others, in the belief that Jehovah, the God of the whole earth, had chosen them as His peculiar people,[3] subjection to a foreign ruler was intolerable. Was not the temple, the "House" of the mighty God, in their midst? Could He allow it to fall into the hands of the worshippers of other gods, and thus let those gods be thought superior to Himself? Would He not, assuredly, make bare His holy arm in their defence, as of old, if they were attacked, and give them the victory over their enemies? Fanaticism had largely taken the place of genuine religion, and the disasters of the past had not destroyed a belief in the invincibility of Judah, which had its roots in national pride. At the opening of Zedekiah's reign, moreover, there seemed hope for Judæa and the nations around. All sighed for their old independence. Nebuchadnezzar was not as yet, in the public imagination, the irresistible conqueror he became in the thirty-six years of his reign which still remained. Common misery had for the time obliterated old feuds in Jerusalem. The iron of slavery had entered into the soul of the people; there was but one thought among them—to regain their freedom. Desperation overpowered prudence.

Nor was this agitation confined to Judah. Far away on the Euphrates, the banished magnates of Jerusalem

[1] Jer. xxiii. 5-7. Leyrer, in Herzog, vol. xxi. p. 542.
[2] Zedekiah, in Hebrew, is *Tsidkiyyahu*, or *Tsidkiyyah*.
[3] Deut. xiv. 2; xxvi. 18. Ps. cxxxv. 4. Exod. xix. 5.

dreamed, as all exiles dream, of a speedy return to their own country, and plotted incessantly to bring it about. Even in Jerusalem it was fondly believed that Jehoiachin would soon come back to his own again.[1] Unworthy prophets zealously favoured this delusion, to please the people, and men like Jeremiah were powerless to convince their fellow-citizens, against their will, of the folly of these expectations. Pharaoh Necho, however, had died in the second year of Zedekiah's reign,[2] and his son Psammetichus II. was too busy with schemes of conquest in Ethiopia to interfere in the affairs of Palestine. Religious troubles in the countries south of Egypt supplied a pretext for war with them, while he, further, claimed their sovereignty through his aunt, an Ethiopian princess, whom he had married. A new sect in these territories, led by some priests, asserted the right to eat the flesh of sacrifices raw, dispensing with the hitherto indispensable cooking; an outrage on all Egyptian ideas, to be suppressed by the sword. An expedition was therefore undertaken to crush the heretics; Carians and Phœnicians, among others, forming mercenary corps in the Egyptian force; as inscriptions, left by some of them on the limbs of one of the colossal statues before the rock temple of Ipsamboul, still curiously shew.[3] But Psammetichus returned to Egypt only to die. During his reign, Palestine, quiet outwardly, had seethed with political excitement. Moab, Ammon, Edom, Tyre and Sidon, most of whom had shortly before fought against Judah as allies of Nebuchadnezzar, were

[1] Jer. xxviii. 4.

[2] B.C. 596.

[3] Some of these are as follows: "When King Psammetichus came to Elephantina, this was written by the companions of Psammetichus, the son of Theocles." "I have been written by Acchon," etc. "Telaphos of Talyson (in the island of Rhodes) wrote me," etc.

anxious to induce Zedekiah to join in a general revolt. The weak Hebrew community was in danger of drifting into a war with the greatest power of the day.

Anxious to quiet the mind of Nebuchadnezzar, and shew his own loyalty, Zedekiah, under these circumstances, determined to make a journey to Babylon, to do homage for investiture in his kingdom, and to present the gifts customary in the East on such occasions.[1] He had delayed discharging this duty till the fourth year of his reign,[2] and it was now imperative that he should try to clear himself from suspicion of collusion with the restlessness of his subjects, or of the communities round him.

This incident is memorable from the light it throws on the supernatural prevision of the Hebrew prophets. Jeremiah, ever loyal to his countrymen, resolved to take advantage of it, by sending a communication to the exiles, cheering them by revealing the doom in store for Babylon, notwithstanding its pride and strength. The oppressor would, in God's time, be humbled as deeply as the captives now banished from Zion. Having written the prediction on a roll, he committed it to the care of Seraiah, the officer in charge of the royal gifts,[3] with the command that on his reaching Babylon in the train of Zedekiah, he should read it to the exiles, no doubt in secret, and afterwards tie a stone to the roll, and sink it in the Euphrates, repeating as he did so a short form of prayer and concluding comment; thus—"O Jehovah, Thou hast spoken against this place, to cut it off, so that none shall remain in it, neither

[1] Gifts are, still, always presented in the East by an inferior in approaching a superior for the first time. Bishop Heber relates, that his servants, even to the poorest, brought presents to him on their entering his employment, when he first went to India. Heber's *Journal*, vol. i. p. 25.

[2] Jer. li. 59.

[3] The words, "a quiet prince" (Jer. li. 59) should be thus translated.

man nor beast, but that it shall be desolate forever;" adding, as the book sank out of sight in the waters: "Thus shall Babylon sink, and shall not rise from the evil that I, Jehovah, bring upon her; for the Babylonians will, in their turn, wax faint and perish."[1]

The prophecy thus strangely published in the very territory whose doom it proclaimed, has been preserved, from the original left by Jeremiah, of which the roll sent to Babylon must have been a copy. That it was written nearly seventy years before the close of the Chaldæan empire, when no sign of its fall could possibly have been visible—when, indeed, it was at the height of its glory as the greatest monarchy of the world—is a startling indication of its Divine source. Inspiration, in its strictest sense, could alone have dreamed of it.

"L. 2. Declare ye,[2] among the nations—began the roll—publish it, and lift up a signal,[3] conceal it not: say, Babylon is taken. Bel[4] is brought to shame; Merodach[5] is in dismay; the idols of Babylon are put to shame; her doll-gods are broken in pieces! 3. For a nation comes up against her out of the north;[6] it makes her land desolate,

[1] Literally, "be exhausted, or wearied out." Jer. li. 59–64.

[2] Jer. l. 1–8. [3] Hebrew, banner, ensign.

[4] Bel, or Baal, was the chief god of the city of Babylon, but not the national god of Babylonia. His name stands first in two lists of gods, deciphered by Schrader. *Studien u. Kritiken*, 1874, pp. 335, ff.

[5] Merodach, or Marduk, was identical with the Babylonian Bel, and became prince of the gods only when a sultan like Nebuchadnezzar had become undisputed master of Babylonia, and had adopted him as his patron divinity. Thus specially honoured, he was, henceforth, one of the chief Babylonian gods, and corresponded to the Jupiter of the Romans (Riehm, 108), being, in fact, the planet of that name (Riehm, 982). Bel and Merodach were often used as a combined name of the tutelar god of Babylon. "The whole Babylonian dynasty," says Oppert, "put Merodach at the head of the gods, and the inscription of Borsippa calls him king of heaven and earth." (*Expéd. en Mésopot.*, vol. ii. p. 272.) Bel was, indeed, only one Baal among many Baalim, supreme when his worshippers were so, but, at other times, whether called Merodach or Bel, only the god of the single city of Babylon and its inhabitants. Sayce, *Hibbert Lectures*, 96.

[6] In verse 9 the enemy of Babylon is spoken of as an alliance of nations. Their names are given in chap. li. 27, 28.

so that no one dwells in it; both man and beast are fled from it and gone!

"4. In those days,[1] and at that time, says Jehovah, the sons of Israel and the sons of Judah will return (to Palestine) together, weeping all the way as they go, and will seek Jehovah, their God. 5. They will ask the way to Zion, with their faces hitherward.[2] And those in Judah will say, 'Come, let us join ourselves to Jehovah, in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten.' 6. My people have been (like) lost sheep. Their shepherds led them to mountains on which they went astray;[3] they went from mountain to hill; they forgot their (true) resting place.[4] 7. All who met them devoured them, and their oppressors said, 'We are guilty of nothing, for they have sinned against Jehovah, the Habitation of Righteousness; against Jehovah, the Hope of their fathers.' 8. Flee out of Babylon; go forth from the land of the Chaldæans, and be as the he-goats before the flock." [5]

The fall of Babylon is again foretold.

"9. For, lo, I will raise and lead against Babylon an assembly of great nations from the north. They will array themselves against her. From the north will she be taken. Their arrows will be like those of a skilled warrior, who does not return empty.[6] 10. And Chaldæa shall be a spoil; all who plunder it will be satisfied with booty, saith Jehovah. 11. For though ye are glad now; though ye rejoice, O ye plunderers of My heritage; though ye leap like a heifer on the threshing floor; though ye neigh like stallions, 12. yet (Babylon) your mother shall be put to shame; she that bore you will blush red. (For men will say:) '(Babylon is become) the least of the nations, a waste desert, a barren steppe!' 13. Because of the wrath of Jehovah it will not be inhabited, but will be wholly desolate; every one who passes by it will be astonished, and hiss at all the punishments she has received."

The enemy is now directly addressed.

[1] Jer. l. 4–13.

[2] Jeremiah writes from Jerusalem. Mark this undesigned evidence of the genuineness of the prophecy.

[3] The idol high places in the hills.

[4] Under the shadow of Jehovah.

[5] "The soldiers were obliged to buy a large he-goat, to walk at the head of the flock; for, until they did so, the sheep ran hither and thither, and could not be driven comfortably." *Six Years in India*, p. 114.

[6] 2 Sam. i. 22.

"14. Array yourselves against Babylon,[1] round about, all ye that bend the bow; shoot at her; spare no arrow; for she has sinned against Jehovah! 15. Raise the battle shout round her; she has surrendered;[2] her bastions are fallen; her walls are overthrown;[3] for it is the vengeance of Jehovah! Take ye vengeance on her! As she has done, do ye to her! 16. Cut off the sower from Babylon, and him who handles the sickle in the time of harvest! Before the destroying sword every one (of the captives in Babylon) will turn to his own people, and flee to his own land. 17. Israel is a sheep driven away from its pasture; the lions have driven it away. First, the king of Assyria devoured it, and now, at the last, this Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, has craunched up its bones. 18. Therefore, Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel, speaks thus: Behold, I will punish the king of Babylon and his land, as I punished the king of Assyria."

Israel, however, has a glorious future before it.

"19. And I will lead Israel back again to his pasture, and he shall feed on Carmel and Bashan, and his soul shall be satisfied on Mount Ephraim and in Gilead. 20. In those days and at that time, saith Jehovah, the iniquity of Israel will be sought, but it will be gone; and the sins of Judah, but they will not be found; for I will pardon those that I leave remaining."

Babylon, the defiant enemy of Jehovah, will be brought low as a punishment for her offence against His temple at Jerusalem.

"21. Go up against (Babylon) the land of Double Rebellion (rebellion by pride and its idolatry, and by its enmity to Jehovah); against it—the City of Punishment[4] (worthy of wrath, and soon to feel it). (Let them that) attack it, slay and utterly destroy behind them, and do all that I have commanded thee (saith Jehovah)!

[1] **Jer. l. 14–21.** [2] Literally, "given her hand."

[3] Cyrus only made breaches in the walls, but Darius, in his later siege, destroyed part of them, and threw down all the gates. Blakesley thinks that Cyrus stormed the palace fortress on the bank of the river, by cutting the dam which retained the water in its moats, and then digging through the walls; a scheme never anticipated. *Herod.*, i. 142.

[4] "Pekod," in A. V., was the name of a place in Babylon, so that "Merathaim" (A. V., ver. 21) may also have been some place, now unknown.

"22. A sound[1] of battle is in the land, and of great destruction! 23. How is the Hammer[2] of the whole earth cut asunder and broken. How is Babylon become a desolation among the nations! 24. I laid nets for thee, and thou wast taken, O Babylon, when thou didst not expect it.[3] Thou wast found and caught (like a wild beast), because thou hast striven against Jehovah. 25. Jehovah has opened His armoury, and brought out the weapons of His wrath; for Jehovah, the Lord of Hosts, has a work to do in the land of the Chaldæans. 26. Come ye up against her, ye nations, from the first of you to the last; open her granaries; throw up her (treasures) in heaps, and burn them utterly:[4] let nothing be spared! 27. Slay all her (people, like) bullocks; let them sink in the slaughter! Woe to them, for their day has come; the time of their visitation! 28. Hark! (the exiled of Israel) are fleeing and escaping out of the land of Babylon, to declare in Zion the vengeance of Jehovah our God (against the guilty city); His vengeance (against it) for (destroying) His temple!

"29. Call together the archers against Babylon: all ye that bend the bow, invest it round about. Let none escape from her: recompense her according to her work; do to her as she has done: for she has been haughty against Jehovah, the Holy One of Israel! 30. Therefore will her young men fall in the streets, and all her fighting men be destroyed in that day, saith Jehovah. 31. Behold! I come against you, O thou who art Pride itself, saith the Lord, Jehovah of hosts; for thy day has come; the time when I will punish thee! 32. And the Haughty one[5] will stumble and fall, and no one will raise him up; and I will kindle fire in his cities that will devour all round about him.

"33. Thus saith Jehovah of hosts: The sons of Israel, and the sons of Judah are oppressed together, and all their tyrants have held them fast, and have refused to let them go. 34. But their Avenger is

[1] Jer. l. 22–34.

[2] This name, here given to Babylon, was borne by Judas Maccabæus, if the derivation of the latter word be from Makkâbh. Charles Martel is equivalent to Charles the Hammer. He was the grandfather of Charlemagne, and won a great victory over the Saracens at Tours in A.D. 732. On the tomb of Edward I., moreover, are the words Scotorum Malleus, the Hammer of the Scots. The tomb is in Westminster Abbey.

[3] Herodotus speaks of the astonishment of the inhabitants of Babylon at its capture, i. 191; iii. 158.

[4] Literally, "put them under the ban, or destroy them." See Josh. xi. 12, 13. All the wealth of Babylon is in reality meant. What could not be carried off was to be burnt with the city.

[5] Literally, "Pride."

strong; Jehovah of hosts is His name: He will carry through their cause; to give rest to the earth, and to make the inhabitants of Babylon tremble.

"35. A sword is against the Chaldæans, saith Jehovah,[1] and against the inhabitants of Babylon, and against her princes, and against her 'Wise men!' 36. A sword is against her boasters, and they will

THE SITE OF BABYLON DURING THE INUNDATION OF THE EUPHRATES.

From a drawing by J. B. Fraser, Esq.

become fools! A sword is against her braves, and they will be dismayed! 37. A sword is against their horses, and against their chariots, and against all the mercenary soldiers in the midst of her, and they shall become like women! A sword is against her treasures, and they shall be plundered! 38. A drought[2] is upon her streams, and they shall dry up! For it is a land of graven images, and they let themselves be befooled by these frightful gods!

[1] Jer. l. 35-38. [2] Sword. Ewald.

"39. Therefore,[1] the wild beasts of the desert shall dwell there with jackals; ostriches will dwell in it, and it will be inhabited no more for ever, nor be peopled from generation to generation! 40. As God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah and the towns near them, saith Jehovah, no one will abide in Babylon, nor any one dwell in it.

"41. Behold! a people comes from the north, and a great nation and many kings rise up from the farthest parts of the earth. 42. They hold the bow and the lance; they are cruel and without pity; their voice roars like the sea, and they ride on horses, equipped like a warrior for the fight, against thee, O Babylon! 43. The king of Babylon has heard the rumour of them and his hands are powerless; anguish has seized him; fear like that of a woman in travail.

"44. Behold! the enemy comes up (against Babylon) as a lion (ascends) from the thickets[2] of Jordan to the hill pastures,[3] and I, Jehovah, will make the flock run, forthwith (in terror, from Babylon, their pasture), and will appoint over it him who is chosen[4] by Me. For who is My equal, and who may challenge what I do? And who is the shepherd (of a people) that can stand before Me (if I be against him)? 45. Therefore, hear the counsel of Jehovah that He has taken against Babylon, and His purposes that he has determined against the land of the Chaldæans. Surely the enemy shall drag the people of Babylon along into captivity, as lions drag away the weak ones of the flock. Surely Babylon (their pasture) will be confounded at their fate! 46. At the shout, 'Babylon is taken,' the earth will tremble and a cry of joy will ring through the nations!

"LI. 1. Thus saith Jehovah: Behold, I will raise up against Babylon, and in Laib Kamai (the heart of My enemy, the Chaldæan[5]), a destroying wind,[6] 2. and I will send against Babylon winnowers,[7] who

[1] Jer. l. 39–li. 2.

[2] Literally, "pride." The thickets on the edges of the bed of the Jordan are meant. See pp. 157, 239. This passage (44–46) is nearly the same as ch. xlix. 19–21.

[3] Wilton's *Negeb*, p. 43. [4] Ewald. Graf.

[5] The words Laib Kamai are equivalent to the word Casdim, the Chaldæans, in the cipher or secret writing known by the name of Athbash. See chap. xxv. 26, and p. 316. This secret cipher writing may have been adopted to enforce the fact of Chaldæa being the stronghold of the idolatry that corrupted Israel and the world. It could serve no purpose of mere concealment, as the name of Babylon itself had already been repeatedly used openly.

[6] This may be read, "the spirit of a destroyer;" or, "the spirit of destruction," but the second reading suits best what follows.

[7] In the Hebrew text, as it stands, the word is "strangers," "barbarians," and is thus translated by Keil and others; but a very slight change makes it as rendered above, and this is more in harmony with the figure of the prophet.

shall throw her up against the wind (with their shovels[1]), and empty her land (for she is but chaff which the wind carries away). For they shall gather round her in the day of her trouble. 3. Let the archer[2] bend his bow against him that bends his (from the walls), and (against him) that stands up in his armour (for battle),[3] and spare not her young men; destroy her whole host. 4. so that the slain fall in the land of the Chaldæans, and those thrust through, in her streets.

"5. For Israel is not left widowed, nor Judah, by her God, by Jehovah of hosts; but their land (the land of the Chaldæans, is widowed, which) is full of sin against the Holy One of Israel. 6. Flee out of Babylon, and save, every one, his life; perish not through her iniquity! For it is a time of the vengeance of Jehovah. He will repay her (according to her works)! 7. Babylon was a golden cup in the hand of Jehovah, making drunk the whole earth. The nations drank of her wine, and grew madly besotted. 8. Babylon has fallen suddenly and is shattered to pieces. Raise the loud shriek (of mourning) for her (ye captives of all nations in her midst); take balm for her hurt, if so she may be healed! 9. (But they answer:) 'We would have healed Babylon, but she is not healed. Let us leave her, and let us, every one, go to his own land, for her punishment reaches to heaven and rises even to the clouds. 10. Jehovah has brought to light the justice of our cause.[4] Come, let us tell in Zion the great deeds of Jehovah our God!'"

The attack on Babylon is once more described.

"11. Polish the arrows; put on the shields;[5] Jehovah has roused the hearts[6] of the kings of the Medes,[7] for His purpose stands firm

[1] In the A. V. the words fanner and fan are used. They come from the Latin *vannus*, a broad basket into which the corn and chaff were put after threshing, to be thrown up against the wind, and thus separated. The Jews used a shovel instead of the *vannus*, which is related to *ventus*, the wind. [2] Jer. li. 3–11.

[3] The word in the A. V. is brigandine, a kind of scale armour of many jointed plates, very pliant and easy for the body. It got its name from being used by the light-armed foot soldiers known as *brigands*, and came to us from the French. The mercenaries of the Middle Ages, when disbanded, often took to robbery, and hence the modern sense of *brigands*. Thus, also, a pirate's ship became a *brigandine*, of which *brig* is only an abbreviation. Venables, in *Bib. Educator*.

[4] Literally, "righteousness."

[5] Literally, "fill," *i.e.*, with the arm. The Septuagint and Vulgate read "quivers," and are followed by Ewald. [6] Literally, "spirits."

[7] The chiefs of the different tribes or districts, under whom the Medes lived till they revolted from Assyria in B.C. 714 and put themselves under one head. The

against Babylon, to destroy it; yea, its utter destruction is the vengeance on it of Jehovah; the vengeance for (the destruction of) His temple. 12. Set up a standard towards the walls of Babylon;[1] strengthen the picquets; post the sentinels; get ready the spies,[2] for Jehovah has both purposed and carried out what He spoke against the inhabitants of Babylon. 13. O thou that dwellest by many waters,[3] rich in treasures, thine end is come; the measure of thy gains (is past). 14. Jehovah of hosts has sworn by His life—'Though I have filled thee with men like grasshoppers (for number), yet shall the shout (of the treading of the vintage) be raised against thee!'"[4]

The omnipotence of Jehovah the Creator will triumph over the idols of Babylon, and break in pieces its mighty power.

"15. He who created the earth by His might,[5] and founded the world by His wisdom, and stretched out the heavens by His understanding; 16. when He thunders there is a noise of waters in the skies, and He causeth clouds to rise from the end of the earth: He makes the lightnings bring rain, and brings forth the wind from its storehouses. 17. The knowledge of this makes every man seem without understanding; it makes every idol-founder ashamed of his graven image, for his molten work is a lie; there is no breath in it. 18. They are nothing; they are worthy only of mockery;[6] in the time of their visitation they shall perish.

"19. Jehovah, the Portion of Jacob, is not like these. He is the Former of the Universe, and of Israel, His own people.[7] Jehovah of hosts is His name."

Medes, moreover, are used for all the Aryan races who joined against Babylon, they being the chief Aryan nation. S. Spiegel, *Erân*, 1863, pp. 308, ff. In Isa. xxi. 2, Elam is named along with Media, as the assailant of Babylon, which finally fell before Darius the Mede and Cyrus the Persian; Elam being called Persia from the beginning of his reign. Persians are first expressly named by Ezekiel and Daniel. See pp. 101, ff.

[1] = "To encamp before." Jer. li. 12-19.

[2] This seems better than "ambushes," which could only be of use in a siege if a sally were enticed. It is used by Ewald.

[3] The many canals of Babylonia, led off from the Euphrates.

[4] The cry of the stormers will be like the song of the treaders of the vintage, red with the blood of the grapes.

[5] These verses, 15-19, are almost identical with chap. x. 12-16.

[6] Jerome.

[7] The word is Shaibet, which means a rod growing from the root of a tree; then, the staff of office of the sheik of a tribe; then, a tribe. The Hebrew text reads, lit-

The awful power of Babylon, the Hammer of the earth, used by God to carry out His judgments on the nations, is described.

"20. Thou art[1] My Hammer:[2] My weapons of war; with thee I smite in pieces the nations, and destroy kingdoms. 21. With thee I smite down the horse and his rider; with thee I smite in pieces the chariot, and smite down the charioteer. 22. With thee I smite down men and women; with thee I smite down old and young; with thee I smite down the youth and the maiden. 23. With thee I smite down the shepherd and his flock; with thee I smite down the husbandman and his span of oxen; with thee I smite down rulers of provinces and governors[3] of countries."

But Babylon is itself to be destroyed, for its cruelty to the nations, especially to Israel.

"24. But I will requite Babylon and all the inhabitants of Chaldæa, for all the wickedness they have wrought on Zion, before your eyes, saith Jehovah! 25. Behold, I come against thee, O mountain of destruction, saith Jehovah; who hast destroyed the whole earth. I stretch my hand out against thee, and roll thee down from the rocks, and make thee a burnt mountain,[4] 26. so that they will not take from thee even a stone for the corner of a house, nor for a foundation stone, but thou shalt be a perpetual desolation, says Jehovah."

The assailants of Babylon are now summoned to attack her.

erally, "the tribe of His inheritance, or possession," that is, His own peculiar people. For the full significance of Shaibet, see Keil's *Josua*, p. 18.

[1] **Jer. li. 20-26.**

[2] A mace, club, or maul. The Middle Age "morning star," a club filled, at its head, with sharp points stuck on a round ball, is perhaps nearest the idea. There is one in the trophy on the silver tomb of St. Alex. Newsky at St. Petersburg.

[3] The two words are Pekhah and Sagan. They both occur again in ver. 28; the second also in ver. 57. The first is applied to Tatnai, satrap of the province west of the Euphrates (Ezra v. 6), to Nehemiah (Neh. v. 14), and to Zerubbabel (Hag. i. 1), the governors of the small province of Judah, after the Return. The Assyrians used the word Pahat of the rulers of provinces. (Schrader, *Keilinschr.*, p. 89.) Sagan means strictly, deputy of the prince, or viceroy. Its Assyrian equivalent is Saknu — a king's deputy, a ruler. (Schrader, p. 270.)

[4] The figure of a mighty fortress on a mountain is here used of Babylon, though it was on a plain.

"27. Set ye up a standard[1] on the earth, ye peoples; blow the trumpet among the nations; consecrate the nations for war against her (by war sacrifices);[2] summon against her the kingdoms of Ararat, Minni, and Ashchenaz.[3] Appoint a scribe (to enrol the hosts).[4] Let horses rush on countless as the rough locusts[5] (the terror of mankind). 28. Consecrate against her (by sacrifices) the nations, the kings of the Medes, the rulers of their provinces and all the governors of their countries, and all the lands of her empire! 29. The earth trembles and is convulsed with fear, for the purposes of Jehovah against Babylon are being accomplished, to make the land of Babylon a desert, without an inhabitant! 30. The braves of Babylon have ceased to fight; they sit in their strongholds; their strength is worn out; they are become like women; the enemy has burned the houses (of Babylon); the bars (of her city gates) are broken through! 31. One foot-runner meets another (rushing in from elsewhere), and messenger meets messenger, come to bring the king of Babylon (in his palace) tidings that 'his city is taken from end to end,' 32. the ferries occupied;[6] the buildings over the water reservoirs burnt[7] with fire, and the fighting men panic stricken!

"33. For thus saith Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel: the daughter of Babylon is like a threshing floor at the time when the grain is trampled out (by the oxen); a little while, and the time of her harvest comes to her! 34. (The inhabitants of Zion will say), 'Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon has devoured us; he has crunched

[1] Jer. li. 27-34.

[2] Literally, "consecrate the nations against her."

[3] These three kingdoms were different regions of Armenia. The Minni lived round Lake Van. Ashchenaz seems to mean "the horse-milkers," and, if so, may point to a race of nomades like the modern Tartars, or the ancient Scythians; roaming the steppes of upper western Asia, in the neighbourhood of the Cimmerians, and allied to them in blood. It may be that we have traces of it in the river *Ascanius* in Asia Minor, and in the names *Scandia* and *Scandinavia*, but this is doubtful.

[4] The Hebrew word is Tephar = Assyr. *dupsar* = writer on tablets. Fried. Delitzsch, *Wo lag das Paradies?* p. 142.

[5] Locusts in their third stage, when their wings are still enveloped in rough, horny cases, which stick up upon their backs. It is in this stage that they are so destructive (*Speaker's Commentary*). I have added the words, however, "the terror of mankind," because the word "rough"—terrible, causing shuddering, may refer only to the alarm they excited and the destruction they wrought.

[6] There was only one bridge in Babylon. The word meaning literally "crossings."

[7] Any one who has seen the huge underground reservoirs at Constantinople, their tops broken in, their bottom filled with rubbish, since 1453, when the barbarian Turk took the city, will understand this passage.

us in pieces: he has pushed us aside as an empty vessel: he has swallowed us up as might a dragon: he has filled himself with our dainties; he has driven us out (of our land).' 35. 'My wrong and suffering[1] come on Babylon!' will the inhabitress of Zion say, and Jerusalem will add, 'my blood come on the inhabitants of Chaldæa!'

"36. Therefore, thus saith Jehovah: Behold, I will take up thy cause, and take vengeance for thee. I will dry up her sea (the great lake in her midst),[2] and I will dry up her (network of) canals.[3] 37. And Babylon shall become heaps of ruin, a dwelling of jackals, an astonishment, and a mockery, without an inhabitant."

The citizens will perish, and also their city and its gods.

"38. (The inhabitants of Babylon) may roar like lions; they may growl like young lions. 39. (yet) while they glow (with lust), I will prepare their drinking feasts, and will make them drunk,[4] that they may rejoice, and then sink into a perpetual sleep, never awaking, saith Jehovah! 40. I will drive them down like lambs to the slaughter-house; like rams and he goats! 41. How is Sheshach[5] (that is, Babylon) taken! How is the city that was the Wonder of the whole Earth made a prize![6] How is Babylon become an astonishment among the nations!

"42. The sea-(like army of her foes) has come up against Babylon; she is covered with the noise of its waves! 43. Her cities are a desolation, a land of drought, a barren steppe; a land in which no man dwells, and through which no man passes. 44. For I will punish Bel, in Babylon, and bring forth out of his mouth what he has swallowed down: and the nations will no longer stream to him; the (very) wall of Babylon shall fall!"

The Jewish captives in Babylon are now addressed.

"45. Go out of her, My people! Save, every man, his life from the fierce anger of Jehovah. 46. And beware lest your heart faint, and be not dismayed at the rumour you hear in the land, when one report

[1] Literally, "flesh." **Jer. li. 35-46.**

[2] This lake or reservoir was made by Queen Nitocris, and was 420 furlongs=52½ miles in circumference. Herod., i. 185.

[3] Literally, "her spring"—the source of her canal supply.

[4] This was wonderfully fulfilled at the taking of Babylon.

[5] **Jer. xxv. 26.** See pp. 316, 372. [6] Literally, "seized."

comes this year and still another the next, and there is violence in the land—ruler against ruler. 47. (Let this tell you that,)[1] behold, the days come (says Jehovah), when I will execute judgment on the graven images of Babylon, and when her whole land will be made desolate, and all her slain shall fall in the midst of her.[2] 48. Then will heaven and earth, and all that is therein, rejoice over (the fall of) Babylon; for they that will lay it waste come from the north, says Jehovah. 49. Babylon must fall, O ye slain of Israel, for through her have fallen the slain of the whole earth!

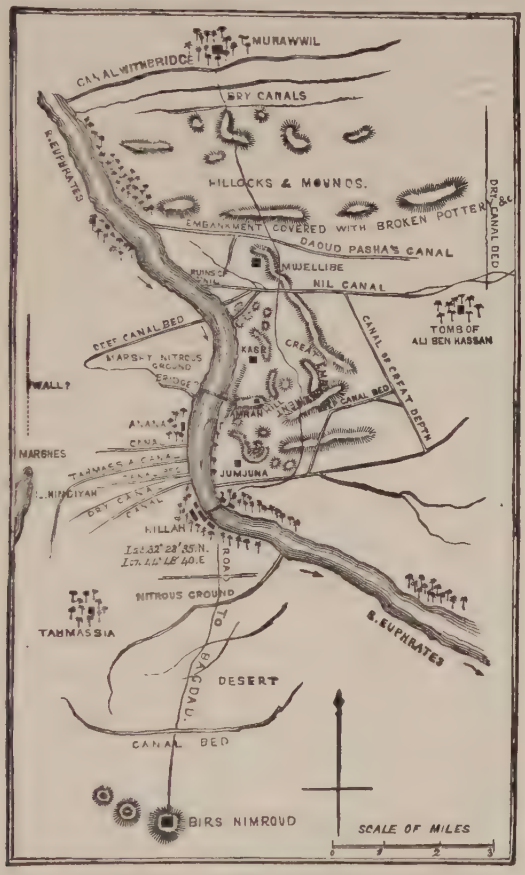
"50. Ye (exiles of Judah) that have escaped the sword, begone from the midst of her; tarry not! Remember Jehovah when far (from Zion), and let Jerusalem come to your mind! 51. (In that day ye will say), 'We were put to shame when we heard the reproach (that had befallen our people); shame covered our faces; for aliens had entered the holy places of the House of Jehovah.'

"52. Wherefore, behold, days come, saith Jehovah, that I will bring punishment on the graven images of Babylon, and wounded men shall groan throughout all her land. 53. Were Babylon to build its walls up to heaven, and to make its lofty defences (seemingly) impregnable, from Me shall come those that shall lay her waste, says Jehovah.

"54. Hark! a cry from Babylon, and great destruction from the land of the Chaldæans. 55. For Jehovah lays Babylon waste, and hushes[3] the loud sound of her multitudes. For the waves (of the conquering hosts assailing her) roar like the voice of many waters; the clamour of their awful tumult sounds abroad. 56. For the destroyer is come up against her, against Babylon, and her braves are taken prisoners, and their bows broken (by the foe); for the Lord Jehovah is an avenging God; He will repay her wickedness (upon her). 57. I will make drunk her princes, her Wise Men, her satraps, and governors, and fighting men; and they shall sleep a perpetual sleep, from which they shall not wake, saith The King, whose name is Jehovah of hosts. 58. Thus saith Jehovah of hosts: The broad walls of Babylon[4] shall be levelled to the ground, and her lofty gates[5] burnt with fire, so that the (captive) peoples who have built them shall have laboured for nothing, and the nations shall have only worn themselves out in creating what will be food for fire."[6]

[1] **Jer. li. 47-58.**
[2] See ver. 43.
[3] Literally, "destroys."
[4] See vol. vi. p. 262.
[5] In the circuit of the wall were a hundred gates, all of brass with brazen lintels and side posts. Herod., i. 179.
[6] A quotation from Hab. ii. 13.

Thus wonderfully was the fate of Babylon foretold, two



PLAN OF THE RUINS OF BABYLON.

generations before its fall; when, indeed, it was at the flood-tide of its glory![1]

[1] Chapters l. and li., containing so amazing a prediction, have, of course, been set down, by some, as the work of a later writer than Jeremiah. But they are expressly

The visit of Zedekiah to the Great City was paid not a moment too soon, for the agitation among the exiles on the Chebar was known to the Chaldæan authorities, who had determined to suppress it by the sternest measures. It was found that the Jewish colony firmly believed that Nebuchadnezzar would soon be overthrown, and that Jehoiachin, thus set free, would return to Palestine at the head of his victorious people. Plots, to which the magnates of Jerusalem were privy, were discovered. False prophets, both there and in Babylon, were stirring up the people, by raising false hopes of a speedy deliverance from Chaldæan bondage or vassalage. Some of these on the Chebar were, therefore, seized as ring-leaders of the popular disaffection, and two of them, at least, to spread terror among the exiles, seem to have suffered the fearful death of being roasted alive,[1] while it is probable that it was to this restlessness among his brethren that Jehoiachin owed the exceptional severity of his treatment. Not long after the return of Zedekiah from Babylon, an incident happened, ominous for his future relations to Nebuchadnezzar. The seething restlessness of the neighbouring

assigned to him in chap. li. 59. One objection made to their being his is the hostility he shews to the Chaldæans, but in chap. xxv. 12, 26, the same hostility is already expressed. Nor does it contradict this, that he speaks of the Chaldæans elsewhere as the instruments of Divine vengeance, to whom the Jews must yield. As to the style, no composition could more exactly resemble Jeremiah's. Nor would a writer during the Exile have written as in chap. l. 5, "With their faces *hitherward*," that is, towards Jerusalem. Any one writing in Babylon would have said *thitherward*. An undesigned touch like this is most significant. It is said that the knowledge of Babylon shewn by these chapters implies their composition by one familiar with that country. But in chap. xiii. it is expressly said that Jeremiah paid two visits to it—perhaps of long duration. Words are quoted as occurring of later date than Zedekiah's time; but this can be shewn demonstrably to be an error in each instance. The use of ciphers or secret names, for the great city—"Laib Kamai" and "Sheshach" which the Jews only would understand, speaks, also, for a concealment of the design of the prophecy, though this must not be thought of much weight, as Babylon, after all, is frequently named.

[1] Jer. xxix. 22.

states, under the Chaldæan yoke, had at last led to their sending a joint embassy from Edom, Moab, the Ammonites, and the kings of Tyre and Sidon,[1] to Jerusalem, in the hope of inducing Zedekiah[2] to enter into a league with them against the common enemy. What success they had is not recorded, though it is unlikely that the Jewish king committed himself, so early in his reign, by an act of open hostility to his master, especially in alliance with states which had for ages been the bitter foes of his race. The Egyptian party, no doubt, wished him to join them; but the voice of Jeremiah rose, to warn him from a step so fatal. Enforcing his words by a striking symbolical act, he procured a number of common ox yokes, and having put one on his own neck, to wear henceforth, apparently, while the embassy was in the city, he sent another to each of the envoys, desiring them to take them back with them to their respective countries, with the following message to their masters, from Jehovah:

"XXVII. 4. Thus says Jehovah of hosts,[3] the God of Israel: Thus shall ye speak to your masters. 5. I have made the earth, and man, and the beasts on the face of the earth, by My great power and My outstretched arm, and I give it to whom I see fit. 6. And, now, I have given all these lands into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, my servant, and the beasts of the field, also, have I given him, to serve him. 7. And all nations shall serve him, his son, and his son's son, till the time of his own land comes, and, then, many nations and great kings shall make him *their* servant. 8. And the nation and people that will not serve him, Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, and that does not give its neck to his yoke, that nation I will punish with sword, famine, and pestilence, till I have consumed them by his hand. 9. Do not listen, therefore, to your prophets,[4] or

[1] Jer. xxvii. 1–3.

[2] In verse 1, Jehoiakim is an error of some ancient copyist for Zedekiah.

[3] **Jer. xxvii. 4-9.** For Jehoiakim in v. 1, read "Zedekiah." See v. 3.

[4] The heathen nations around had, thus, their own prophets; the order was not

diviners, or explainers of dreams, or dabblers in the black arts, or sorcerers, who say to you—'Ye shall *not* serve the king of Babylon!' 10. They prophesy a lie to you, to make Me remove you far from your land, and drive you out, so that ye perish. 11. But the people that gives its neck to the yoke of the king of Babylon and serves him, I will leave in their own land, says Jehovah, and they shall till it, and dwell in it."

About the same time the prophet addressed Zedekiah and the court in the same strain.

"12. Bring your necks,[1] said he, into the yoke of the king of Babylon, and serve him and his people, and you shall live. 13. Why should you and your people die by the sword, famine, and pestilence, as Jehovah has said of the people that will not serve the king of Babylon? 14. Do not listen to the words of the prophets who say to you—'Ye shall *not* serve the king of Babylon.' They prophesy a lie to you! 15. For I have not sent them, says Jehovah, but they prophesy falsely in My name, to make Me drive you out, and that you should perish, you, and the prophets who prophesy such words to you."

The priests and all the people were no less faithfully warned. Jeremiah told them:

"16. Thus says Jehovah: Listen not to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you, saying: 'Behold, the vessels of the house of Jehovah which Nebuchadnezzar carried off will now be soon brought back from Babylon.'[2] For they prophesy a lie to you. 17. Listen not to them. Serve the king of Babylon and live. Why should this city be laid waste? 18. If they *be* (true) prophets, and if the word of Jehovah be (really) in them, let them plead with Jehovah of hosts, that the vessels still left in the house of Jehovah, and in the palace of the king of Judah, and at Jerusalem, do not also go to Babylon! 19. For thus says Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel, respecting the pillars, and the brazen sea, and the brazen stands (for the ten lavers of the temple),[3] and the other vessels that remain in the city, 20. which

confined to the Jews. Balaam, of Pethor, on the Euphrates, was an instance of this, and so were the "prophets of Baal" at Samaria.

[1] **Jer. xxvii. 10-20.** [2] 2 Kings xxiv. 13.

[3] The brazen frames on which were placed the lavers used for washing the sacrifices. 1 Kings vii. 27-37. 2 Chron. iv. 6.

Nebuchadnezzar did not take when he carried off Jeconiah, the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, to Babylon, and all the nobles of Judah and Jerusalem: 21. yea, thus says Jehovah of hosts,[1] the God of Israel, respecting the vessels that remain in the house of Jehovah, and in the palace of the king of Judah, and in Jerusalem: 22. They shall be carried to Babylon, and there shall they remain till the day that I go after them, says Jehovah, and fetch them out, to bring them back to this place."[2]

The degenerate prophets thus vigorously exposed, were naturally roused to violent opposition to Jeremiah.[3] One of their number indeed, Hananiah of Gibeon, a priest town, now the village of El Jib, north of Jerusalem, ventured some time in August, B.C. 594,[4] to contradict him in public before the priests and all the people. Such pretenders to revelation were among the hardest trials of their still faithful brethren,[5] and, in this case, when the fate of the nation trembled in the balance, the pain caused by their treacherous course was specially distressing. Using the very style of Jeremiah, his rival began:

"XXVIII. 2. Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel, has spoken thus: 'I have broken the yoke of the king of Babylon! 3. Within two years' time I will bring back to this place all the vessels of the house of Jehovah, that Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, took away from this place and carried to Babylon. 4. And I will bring back to this place, Jeconiah, the son of Jehoiakim, the king of Judah, and all the captives of Judah that went to Babylon; for I will break the yoke of the king of Babylon.'"

[1] Jer. xxvii. 21-xxviii. 4.

[2] They were not carried to Babylon intact, but were broken up, for easier transport, Jer. lii. 17. But the brass or copper of which they were made, stored away in the treasure house of the king of Babylon, might well be among the vast gifts of the old sacred vessels, etc., taken by Nebuchadnezzar, and restored to the returning captives by Cyrus, Ezra i. 11. As to transport across the desert, and their removal to Babylon, it is enough to say, that Assurbanipal records his carrying two lofty obelisks from Thebes in Upper Egypt, to Nineveh. What an obelisk weighs is easily imagined! See *Records of the Past*, vol. i. p. 67.

[3] Jer. xxviii. 1.

[4] 5th month of 4th year, Jer. xxviii. 1.

[5] Jer. xxiii. 9; xxix. 8, 9; xxxi. 32. Ezek. xiii.

Jeremiah himself was among the crowd, and stepping out as soon as Hananiah had ended speaking,[1] addressed him aloud.

"6. Amen! Jehovah do so![2] Jehovah establish your words which you prophesy about the bringing back again the vessels of the House of Jehovah, and all the captives, from Babylon to this place! 7. Only—hear this word that I speak in your ears, and in the ears of all the people! 8. Not I alone, but the prophets who have been before me, and before you, have prophesied (long ago) war, calamity,[3] pestilence, against many countries and great kingdoms. 9. You, who prophesy peace, shall be known to be a prophet truly sent by Jehovah, when your word comes to pass."

But Hananiah was not to be silenced. Snatching from the neck of Jeremiah the ox yoke he had put on when the embassy from Moab and other neighbouring kingdoms first came to Jerusalem, and still wore, he broke it across, and cried out as he held up the pieces:

"11. Thus says Jehovah: Even so will I break the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, from the neck of all nations, within two years' time."

Disdaining further dispute before the crowd, Jeremiah now walked away. But he had no intention of letting Hananiah escape. Going to him privately, he told him, in the name of Jehovah, that he had broken a wooden yoke, only to prepare an iron one for the people, in its place. For Jehovah had said:

"14. I have put a yoke of iron on the neck of all these nations, that they serve Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. And they *shall* serve him, and I have given him even the beasts of the field."

Then, addressing the pretended seer more directly, he added:

[1] Jer. xxviii. 5. [2] Jer. xxviii. 6-14. [3] "Famine," Ewald.

"15. Hear now, Hananiah,[1] Jehovah has not sent you, but you make this people trust in a lie! 16. Therefore Jehovah speaks thus: Behold, I will send you forth from off the face of the earth (that is *my* prophecy in *your* case)! This year you shall die, because you have spoken rebellion against Jehovah!"

Two months later the impostor was dead.[2]

The prediction of Hananiah is a plain indication that secret negotiations, perhaps unknown to Zedekiah, or beyond his control, were already afoot between the Egyptian party in Judah and the court of Psammetichus. It is also clear that a strong feeling in favour of a league with the surrounding nations, against Chaldæa, prevailed. The flattering assurance of the lying prophet had been based on his sanguine confidence in the success of all this diplomacy. He had spoken simply from unreliable political calculations, but his words none the less paralyzed the wise and patriotic efforts of Jeremiah. His sudden death, however, so soon after the prophet's denunciation, was not without effect. It appears to have decided Zedekiah, for the time, to resist the Egyptian party, and remain true to Nebuchadnezzar, to whom he had so recently done homage at Babylon. Terrified lest the report of the embassy from the neighbouring states to Jerusalem should prejudice his master against him, he resolved to send an embassy to his capital,[3] to explain the matter, and vindicate himself from any suspicion of disloyalty or treason. Awed by the judgment on Hananiah, he seems, moreover, to have sought to win the favour of Jehovah by a special gift to the temple of a set of silver vessels, to replace the golden ones that had been carried off by the Chaldæans.[4]

[1] **Jer. xxviii. 15-16.**
[2] Jer. xxviii. 1, comp. xxviii. 17.
[3] Jer. xxix. 3.
[4] Bar. i. 8.

Ever eager to serve the true interests of his nation, Jeremiah gladly seized the opportunity of the embassy to Babylon, to warn the exiles of the folly and hopelessness of their schemes. This he did in a letter addressed to the elders, priests, and prophets among them, which ran thus:

"XXIX. 4. Thus says Jehovah of hosts,[1] the God of Israel, to all the captives whom I have caused to be carried away from Jerusalem to Babylon. 5. Build houses for yourselves, and live in them, and plant gardens and eat their produce. (Act as permanent inhabitants of the land, not as if soon to leave it.) 6. Take wives and beget sons and daughters, and take wives for your sons, and give your daughters to husbands, that they may bear sons and daughters: that ye may increase there and not grow fewer. 7. And seek the prosperity of the city to which I have caused you to be carried off, and pray to Jehovah for it, for in its prosperity you will find your own.

"8. For thus says Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel: Let not the prophets who are among you, and your diviners,[2] deceive you, and do not listen to your dreams, for which you so earnestly strive.[3] 9. For they prophesy falsely to you in My name. I have not sent them, says Jehovah. 10. For thus says Jehovah: I will visit you, first, (only) after seventy years for Babylon are ended, and (will only then) perform My good word toward you, to bring you back to this place. 11. For I know the thoughts that I think respecting you, says Jehovah: thoughts of good and not of evil; to give you a future and a hope. 12. Then (when the sufferings of your exile have taught you the knowledge of your sins) you will call upon Me, and go (to your house of prayer) and pray to Me, and I will hearken to you. 13. And ye will seek and find Me, when ye seek Me with all your heart. 14. And I will (let Myself) be found of you, says Jehovah, and I will bring the captives back again, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places to which I have driven you, says Jehovah; and I will

[1] **Jer. xxix. 4–14.**

[2] The word is used, in 1 Sam. xxviii. 8, of necromancer, but it means men who foretell in any heathen mode, by arrows, entrails, teraphim, or lots.

[3] The most intense efforts were made, by sleeping in holy places, fasting, and keeping the mind fixed on special wishes, to induce dreams of the kind desired. See the case of King Assurbanipal. Lenormant's *Magie*, p. 135. Impostors also pretended to dream such dreams as their clients wished. This is perhaps alluded to in the text.

bring you back again to the place from which I caused you to be carried away captive.

"15. As to your saying,[1] 'Jehovah has raised up prophets to us in Babylon—(I know that they build great hopes on the continuance of the kingdom under Zedekiah). 16. (but) verily, thus says Jehovah of that king, who now sits on the throne of David, and of all the people that dwell in this city (Jerusalem), your brethren, who have not gone with you into captivity,—17. thus says Jehovah of hosts: Behold, I will send among them the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, and make them like vile figs, that cannot be eaten, they are so bad. 18. And I will chase after them with the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, and give them over to ill-treatment[2] in all the kingdoms of the earth; and to be a curse, and an astonishment, and a hissing, and a scorn, among all the nations whither I have driven them. 19. Because they hearkened not to My words, says Jehovah, which I sent to them by My servants the prophets, rising up early and sending. But they would not hear, says Jehovah.

"20. Nevertheless, hear (now) the word of Jehovah, all ye of the captivity, whom I have banished from Jerusalem to Babylon. 21. Thus says Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel, respecting Ahab the son of Kolaiah, and Zedekiah the son of Maaseiah, who prophesy a lie to you in My name: Behold, I will give them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, and he will slay them before your eyes. 22. And all the exiles of Judah who are in Babylon will adopt a (new form of) curse from their fate, saying, 'Jehovah make thee like Zedekiah and Ahab, whom the king of Babylon roasted in the fire.' 23. Because they have committed lewdness in Israel, and have committed adultery with their neighbours' wives, and have spoken lies in My name, which I did not command them to speak. But I know it, and am a witness, says Jehovah!"

This letter created the greatest excitement among the mock prophets in Babylon. It was an attack on the sacred order! It discredited its members in the public estimation, and threatened to be fatal to the plot from which a speedy return of the exiles to their native land

[1] **Jer. xxix. 15-23.**

[2] "Make them a plaything of the wind," Ewald. "Make them a shuddering." The word comes from a verb, "shake," "to agitate," "to tremble." Cheyne, "to disquiet, to maltreat."

was hoped. Shemaiah, one of these prophets, was especially indignant at Jeremiah's advice to build houses and live in them, and plant gardens and eat their produce; waiting patiently till the seventy years of their banishment had passed away. Unable to reach him otherwise, he vented his indignation in a fierce letter to Zephaniah, now the priestly commandant or chief officer of the temple,[1] copies of it being at the same time forwarded to the people of Jerusalem and to some of the ordinary priests.

"XXIX. 26. 'Jehovah,' said this missive,[2] 'has made you priest instead of the priest Jehoiada, to be overseer in the House of Jehovah, charged, with respect to every madman who gives himself out as a prophet, to punish him by putting him in the five-holed stocks,[3] or by making him wear the heavy wooden collar.[4] 27. Why, then, have you not in this way rebuked the presumption of Jeremiah of Anathoth, who makes himself out to you to be a prophet?'"

His special offence to the writer, that he had counselled the exiles to settle down contentedly in Babylon, was then detailed, and with this the letter closed.

Shemaiah had good reason to believe that this attack on the prophet would be successful, for Zephaniah, like himself, belonged to the anti-Chaldæan party; his disloyalty to Nebuchadnezzar costing him his life, at Riblah, a few years later.[5] But in this case he acted honourably. Sum-

[1] Jer. xxi. 1. Pashur had held the office some time previously, Jehoiada had succeeded him, and now this Zephaniah held the post, which may have been tenable for only a year.

[2] Jer. xxix. 26, 27.

[3] Jer. xx. 1.

[4] The word is Tsinok, and seems to have been a heavy wooden collar which the sufferer had to carry about with him, as among the Arabs still. It makes escape impossible, from its weight and size. Burckhardt, *The Bedouins*, p. 420. Rütschi thinks the Mahpecheth, which is by some supposed to have been a five-holed "stocks" in which the body was bent nearly double, was a contrivance in which the arms and legs were inserted crosswise, the name meaning "twisting." The Sad, Job xiii. 27, he believes to have been a pair of stocks in which both hands and feet, or even the neck also, were inserted. Herzog, vol. iv. p. 703. See note, p. 291.

[5] Jer. lii. 24, 27. 2 Kings xxv. 18-21.

moning Jeremiah before him, he read the letter to him, but took no action on it. Such an attempt to injure a true prophet was not, however, to be overlooked by the seer himself, and Shemaiah, to his horror, found, before long, that a counter letter, in reply to his fierce denunciation, had been sent back to the exiles, which marked him out as the object of Divine displeasure, and pronounced, in the name of Jehovah, a terrible punishment for his audacity.

"XXIX. 31. 'Thus says Jehovah,' wrote Jeremiah,[1] respecting him, 'Because Shemaiah has prophesied to you (exiles), and I did not send him, and he caused you to trust in a lie: 32. therefore, thus says Jehovah: Behold, I will punish him and his posterity. He shall have no man to dwell among this people, nor will he see the good that I shall do for My people, says Jehovah, because he has spoken treacherously respecting Jehovah!'"

Equally vigorous resistance to the Egyptian, or war party, shewed itself in the far-distant settlement of the exiles on the Chebar. Jeremiah had sent his letter to them in the middle of the fourth year of Zedekiah.[2] A year later, about July, B.C. 593,[3] a new prophet—Ezekiel, "whom God strengthens"—was divinely commissioned at Tel Abib, on the Euphrates, to urge on his countrymen there, the same counsels. Like Jeremiah, the new seer was the son of a priest. He had been carried off, as we have seen, at the deposition of Jehoiachin, and was now living with his wife, among the exile community, in a house of his own.[4] Of his life or work we know little. The few details left us shew, however, that he found the career of a faithful prophet as painful on the Chebar as it had always

[1] **Jer. xxix. 31, 32.**
[2] Jer. xxviii. 1.
[3] Ezek. i. 1, 2. Schrader says 594.
[4] Ezek. iii. 24; viii. 1; xxiv. 18.

been at Jerusalem, for the bitter hostility he had to endure from his race is significantly compared to walking through briers and thorns, or living among scorpions.[1] To add to all this, his wife, to whom he was devotedly attached, died early,[2] under peculiarly distressing circumstances.

It may have been from this relentless opposition, and perhaps, also, from the circumspection needed under a government like that of Babylonia, that Ezekiel introduced a new practice—of collecting an audience round him in his own house, to hear his communications, instead of going to places of public concourse to harangue the multitude. The "elders," or chief men, gathered round him, from time to time, in his dwelling at Tel Abib, to hear his words, but the mass of the people seemed to have paid little attention to him. When they did come to his small assemblies, he tells us, they appeared too often to have no motive but idle curiosity ;[3] listening to him for the sweetness of his voice, as one might listen to music, but paying no further heed to him.[4] With the changed times, the prophet was laying aside his public character, and passing gradually into the sacred writer, speaking to the world only indirectly.

Trained as a priest, Ezekiel shews his early associations at once in the character of his visions, and in the culture of his style. Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Jeremiah had taken a lively interest in the every-day affairs and passing moods of their fellow-countrymen. Their prophecies, or discourses, had been intensely practical ; touching, each moment, every relation of public, social, and private life.

[1] Ezek. ii. 6.
[2] Ezek. xxiv. 16-18.
[3] Ezek. xxxiii. 30.
[4] Ezek. xxxiii. 32.

Ezekiel, on the other hand, speaks and writes in a way of his own, which is in striking contrast to that of his predecessors. Retiring, and indisposed to the part of an orator, he was more at home as the spokesman of a private group, than in the market place or the town gate. Fond of study, he shrank from noise and excitement. No other prophet shews so full an acquaintance with the older Hebrew literature, especially the Pentateuch; references to which pervade his whole Book. The language of Genesis respecting the creation of man is, in effect, repeated by him;[1] the garden of Eden is often mentioned;[2] the list of nations described in his account of Tyre is borrowed from the Table of Nations in the first book of the Bible;[3] the names of precious stones, which occur so often, are taken from the Pentateuch. The bounds of the Holy Land, which he gives in his great prophetic vision, are almost identical with those of the Book of Numbers.[4] A whole series of legal prescriptions, noticed in his prophecies, are quoted directly from the Pentateuch, as may be seen in any reference Bible. He shews his acquaintance with the prophecies of Hosea and Isaiah, but especially with those of his elder contemporary, Jeremiah,[5] freely using their turns of thought and phrases, as he does those of the Books of Moses. While, therefore, his genius shews itself in frequent passages of lofty sublimity or vigorous strength of expression, there is, on the whole, less originality and

[1] Gen. i. 28. Ezek. xxxvi. 11.
[2] Ezek. xxviii. 13; xxxi. 8; xxxvi. 35.
[3] Gen. x. Ezek. xxvii.
[4] Ezek. xlvii. 13, ff. Num. xxxiv.
[5] Ezek. xxxvii. 22. Hos. i. 11. | Ezek. v. 15. Jer. xxiv. 9.
" xxix. 6. Isa. xxxvi. 6. | " vi. 11, ff. }
" viii. 12. " xxix. 15. | " xxix. 17, ff. } " xxiv. 7.
" vii. 18. Jer. xlviii. 37. | " xi. 19, ff.

And so on.

freedom of thought, than in the more illustrious of his prophetic brethren. Thus, even his great inaugural vision, grand as it is, recalls details of the temple with which as a priest he was familiar, and also of the vision of Isaiah,[1] while his picture of the future temple reminds us of the description of the building of the tabernacle, in Exodus.[2] The influences of his priestly training are, indeed, everywhere apparent, in contrast to the characteristics of Jeremiah, who, though also a priest, has no such professional colouring in his prophecies.

The explanation seems to lie in the different position of the two, in relation to the sacred institutions of their common religion. Far from the temple and its stated offerings; banished from the ecclesiastical atmosphere of Jerusalem; Ezekiel could not, like Jeremiah, move and speak freely, with the consciousness that the symbols of the visible kingdom of God witnessed for themselves amidst the community. He could only betake himself to the regions of fancy and memory, and call up a vision of the temple, and its services he loved so well; now lost to him for ever. Nor did a general picture before his imagination content him. With a passionate devotion to exactness in ritual that marks the character of his mind, he almost anticipates Ezra in the importance he attaches to the minutest ecclesiastical details.

How long Ezekiel continued his labours is not clear, nor is it known when he died. Twenty-seven years after leaving Jerusalem, he was still busily engaged in his mission as prophet,[3] but though this is the latest date in his Book, he may have lived and worked much longer. Tradition speaks of him as having been murdered by a Jewish

[1] Isa. vi. [2] Exod. xxv., ff. [3] Ezek. xxix. 17.

noble whom he had offended, and a tomb said to be his, noted for a lamp kept continually burning, and for a copy of the prophecies said to be in his autograph, was seen by Benjamin of Tudela in the twelfth century.[1]

[1] Layard visited this tomb, and found it only a plain building, without the ornaments or manuscripts it once contained. He quotes at length the description given by Benjamin of Tudela. *Nineveh and Babylon*, vol. i. p. 501.

CHAPTER XIX.

FIRST PROPHECIES OF EZEKIEL.

Ezekiel had lived five years amongst his brethren at Tel Abib, his mind full, no doubt, of the concerns of Judah and Jerusalem, whose utter ruin seemed close at hand, through their restless plotting against Nebuchadnezzar. Around him the same violent political excitement was everywhere visible. Prophets, claiming to speak for God, openly predicted that Babylon would fall within the next two years, leaving the exiled Jews free to return in triumph to their own land.[1] The authorities had, indeed, executed some of these agitators, with fearful tortures, but their flattering promises were not the less eagerly cherished by the Hebrew community. Jeremiah's letter from Jerusalem, counselling contentment in Babylonia, as their home for the next seventy years, had failed to quiet the ferment of the general mind. Meanwhile the priest Ezekiel, far from the temple and its priestly employments, was engrossed by the religious interests of his people, recognizing to the full, that their past calamities were due to their guilty faithlessness towards Jehovah. To lead them back to Him, and thus restore their glory as a nation by regaining His favour, was the thought of his life. His heart cried out for God. The sanctuary on Zion being lost to them, he would fain bring back Jehovah to

[1] Jer. xxviii. 3.

their midst by making their hearts His living temple. Communion with Him in His ancient oracles rounded the days and nights of His servant. The awful revelations of Sinai; the wonders wrought for Israel in Egypt, the wilderness, and the chosen land; His self-disclosures in the temple on Mount Moriah, and His gracious communications through a long succession of prophets, were his absorbing meditation. Others might busy themselves with wild dreams of political changes, and a speedy return to Palestine; he lived in a higher sphere—in the spiritual presence of Jehovah and amidst the realities of eternity. Religious enthusiasm filled his soul as the flame fills the shining crystal of the lamp. To be near God himself, and to bring his people near Him, was his one overmastering passion.

Thus unconsciously prepared for Divine communications, he was quietly resting, perhaps in his house, possibly under his vine and fig-tree,[1] on some day in July,[2] a fiercely hot month in Babylonia—his mind filled to intensity with the high matters always engaging it—when suddenly the heavens seemed to open towards the dark and mysterious north, the region of tempests; ominous, to a few especially, as the region from which the judgments of God[3] on Israel had for centuries come. The sky grew black with clouds[4] driven before a mighty wind,[5] and, in

[1] **Ezek. i. 1-18.** The year is spoken of as the 30th. But from what? Some say from the last jubilee; others, from the 18th year of Josiah's reign, when the Law was found and the Passover held. Others think it means the 30th year of the prophet's age.

[2] In the "4th month," Tammuz.

[3] The north was the land of darkness and mystery to the ancients, and, as such, fittingly the region from which this mysterious vision appeared.

[4] The word translated cloud in A. V. is from a verb "to cover" and is collective in the sense of clouds covering the sky.

[5] The word comes from a verb "to rush" or "be tossed," as a tempest.

the midst of the darkness, lightnings quivered hither and thither, illuminating the storm with awful splendours, and casting a far-spreading brightness around. Amidst the central glory, moreover, shone out an overpowering radiance as of mingled silver and gold,[1] and in this, as the tempest cloud came near, borne on the wings of the storm, four living creatures appeared, upright, and in outline like a man, but each with four faces—of a man, a lion, an ox, and an eagle ; and four wings, with human hands beneath them, and feet like those of an ox, and, like the feet of that creature, moving only straight forward, but shining like polished brass. Two wings of these mysterious forms were outstretched above ; the two others covered their bodies beneath. Each form, never turning aside, advanced in a straight line, with a swiftness like that of the lightnings round them. All, moreover, moved together, as by a common will ; their appearance in keeping with the surrounding splendour, for they shone like glowing coals or blazing torches, bright fire flashing between them, and lightnings darting from it.

Forthwith a new sight revealed itself. Four vast wheels, of awful height, appeared by the side of the four living creatures, bright, throughout, as the then famous precious stone of Tarshish—the topaz or chrysolite—their rims full, everywhere, of eyes. They, too, went straight forward, simultaneously, repeating each movement of the four living forms, as if by the same impulse. At times on the earth, at others, they rose into the air ; now they stood, and then, again, they flashed on, like light.

But now a third wonder shewed itself. A firmament of awful, glittering brightness, bent itself over the heads of

[1] Electron ; a mixture of gold and silver, famous among the ancients.

the living creatures and over the wheels; the wings of the cherubim, underneath, sounding like the noise of many waters, or the voice of the Almighty itself, or the loud murmur of an army of men, as the vision swept on. Then, as in a moment, the whole stood still, and the wings of the cherubim were folded, at the command of a Voice from the firmament above them.

Presently, as if resting on these upper depths, a throne of sapphire stone was seen—the throne of the Eternal—and on it a form of a man, clothed to His loins with dazzling brightness, and thence, to His feet, with flaming fire: a mighty rainbow encircling the throne, above. It was "the appearance of the glory of Jehovah." Overwhelmed by a spectacle so transcendent in all its parts, Ezekiel seemed, in the vision, to fall on his face, but while thus prostrate, was roused by a command from the Eternal:[1] "Son of man, stand on thy feet, and I will speak to thee." With the words came power to obey them; his soul and body, which had well-nigh fainted, receiving strength to stand before the Almighty and listen to His communications, so that he found himself set once more erect. Other words, meanwhile, fell on his ears, from Him who sat on the throne.

"II. 3. Son of man, I send thee to the sons of Israel; to the rebellious nation who have revolted from Me; who, like their fathers, have sinned against Me to this very day! 4. They are sons hard of forehead and hard of heart. I send you to them, and you shall say to them, 'Thus says the Lord Jehovah!' 5. and thus, whether they hear or refuse to do so—for they are (no longer the House of Israel, but) the House of Disobedience—they shall know that a prophet has been among them!

"6. But, as to yourself, O son of man! have no fear of them or of

[1] Ezek. ii. 1-6.

their words; though they be thorns and briers round you, and though (living amongst them) you live among scorpions! Have no fear of their words, and be not dismayed at their looks; for they are a House of Disobedience! 7. And speak My word to them,[1] whether they hear or refuse to do so: for they are most rebellious. 8. But thou, son of man, hear what I say to thee, and be not thou rebellious like that House of Disobedience! Open thy mouth and eat what I give you!"

A hand now appeared, in the vision, stretched out to the prophet, holding the roll of a book, which, on being spread before him, seemed covered, on both sides, with lamentation, and mourning, and woe. Required to eat this,[2] he found it like honey in his mouth, for sweetness. The act was the symbol of his consecration as prophet. But, now, the Voice spoke once more.

"III. 4. Son of man! go, get you to the House of Israel, and speak My words to them. 5. You are not sent to a people of dark speech and hard language, but to the House of Israel; 6. nor to many peoples of dark speech and hard language, whose words you could not understand. I have sent you, on the contrary, to these, thy countrymen, who can understand you.[3] 7. But the House of Israel will not listen to you, because they will not listen to Me. For the whole House of Israel are hard of forehead and hard of heart!

"8. (But I will make you able to meet their defiance with defiance!) Behold, I make your face as hard as their faces, and your forehead as hard as their foreheads. 9. I make your forehead like adamant, which is harder than flint stones. Have no fear of them, and be not dismayed at their looks, for they be a House of Disobedience."

A pause followed, and then the Voice resumed.

[1] **Ezek. ii. 7, 8; iii. 4–9.**

[2] "To eat" is a common Eastern phrase for receiving, accepting, and the like. The Hindoos still speak of "eating blows, grief, wounds, and so on." *Six Years in India*, pp. 107, 120, 131, 193. Nothing is more common, says Lightfoot, in the schools of the Jews, than the phrase of eating and drinking, in a metaphorical sense. *Horæ Heb.*, vol. iii. p. 387. See Rev. x. 9. Jeremiah (xv. 16) speaks of eating the Divine words.

[3] **This is the rendering of this difficult text, by the best critics.**

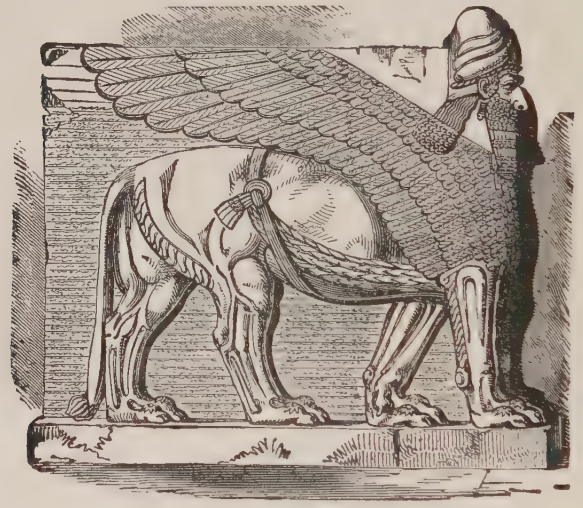
"10. Son of man! take into your heart,[1] and hear with your ears, all the words that I say to you. 11. and go, get you to the Captivity, the children of your people, and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord Jehovah'—whether they hear or refuse to listen."

The wondrous vision was now about to close. Ezekiel had received his Divine commission. But its close was sublime. The Spirit, he tells us,[2] seemed to come on him again, and bear him from the imaginary scene, to the midst of his fellow-captives at Tel Abib, the voices of the living creatures breaking forth like the sound of rolling thunder, in high worship of God, as the vision faded in the distance, his ear catching, from their hymn of adoration, the words, "Exalted be the majesty of Jehovah!" The sound of their wings, as they disappeared, and of the living wheels at their side, like the noise of many waters, presently died away, and the prophet woke, to find himself once more in his home at Tel Abib. But the strain on his whole nature had its effect. A reaction followed. The words in which the wickedness of his people had been rebuked, filled him with mingled grief and indignation, while the awful splendours of the Divine manifestation left him so weak and prostrate, that a week elapsed before he in a measure came to himself.

This vision stands alone for mysterious sublimity. Clear in its great lessons of the omniscience, omnipotence, and majesty of Jehovah, it is confessedly beyond any satisfactory explanation in its details. The difficulty of adequately comprehending it—a feature marking other portions of Ezekiel—has always been felt, and early led the Jews to place the book among those "treasures"[3]

[1] **Ezek. iii. 10–14.**
[2] Keil has "wind" for "spirit;" the word means both.
[3] Genazim. They included also the first chapters of Genesis, and the Canticles.

not to be read by any below the age of thirty.' Much, however, may be learned, even from a vision so mysterious, as to the relations between the natural and divine in inspiration. The source of many of its most striking features



THE ASSYRIAN GOD ADRAMMELECH.

Adar-Malik[2] = Adar is king. From one of the Palace Gates, Nineveh. Known also as Annamelech, or Kewan, the planet Saturn. It is called in the inscriptions, "the Possessor of Power," "the Warrior," "the God of Battles," "the Bearer of the Bow," "the Lord of Fire." The people of Sepharvaim offered their children to it, burning them alive.

can be easily traced. Jehovah had descended on Sinai amidst thunders, and lightnings, and tempest, as He now

[1] Jer., *Ep. ad Eustochium.*

[2] Adar or Ninip played a conspicuous part in Babylonian and Assyrian theology. He was the warrior and the champion of the gods, and, as such, the favourite object of worship of a nation of warriors, like the Assyrians. In Babylonia, however, Adar was by no means the favourite. The less warlike Merodach took his place. Originally, Adar had been a solar deity, but, whereas Merodach was the sun, conceived of as rising from the ocean stream, Adar was the sun as he issues forth from the shades of night.

approached from the North. The fiery cloud had its prototype in that which hung over the tabernacle; winged creatures overshadowed the shrine in some Egyptian temples;[1] and in Solomon's temple two cherubim bent over the mercy seat, while two others, of gigantic size, stood at the sides of the Holy of Holies. In Babylon, moreover, the notice of the prophet must have been arrested by the constant recurrence of huge forms of winged beings, uniting the most opposite features. Winged bulls, lions, and eagles, on every side, guarded the entrances to the palaces and temples of Babylon. Seen for the first time by the exiles, on their arrival at Babylonia, they must have struck with special awe men coming from a land where all sculpture was prohibited, and where even the idols introduced in violation of their sacred law were human in shape, with the exception, perhaps, of the ox-headed Moloch. Forms in all respects similar to the cherubim of the vision would not meet the eye of the prophet, but he would have before him gigantic creations, with the face of a man, the wings of an eagle, and the body of a lion or a bull. That these should have associated themselves in his mind with a vision of the majesty of Jehovah, was in keeping with a law of revelation and of our intellectual nature. We can only conceive of the unknown from the known. We may enlarge or combine the elements we have, but we have no power of creating imaginations out of nothing. Hence the inspired writers in all ages availed themselves of facts and imagery with which they were familiar. The usages and symbols of Egypt mark the earlier books of the Pentateuch. In Palestine, the figures and metaphors of the sacred writers are derived from things round them; and,

[1] I have seen them in many Egyptian temples.

in the same way, in Babylonia, they used their Chaldæan experiences. Indeed, the very word cherub is only the Assyrian *Kirub*.

The symbolism of Ezekiel, as contrasted with that of the earlier Scriptures, is nevertheless significant. At Sinai, his forefathers "saw no similitude" of God. But, living, as he did, amidst gigantic human figures of gods, shining in golden splendour, we have, for the first time, in his vision, a form assigned to Jehovah, as if, by gathering round Him a splendour compared with which that of the idols grew pale, he would lift the thoughts of his countrymen to His infinitely transcendent glory, and yet utilize the impressions made on their minds by the religion of the locality. It will be remembered that in this he was followed by Daniel,[1] writing amidst the same influences. He also uses imaginary beings, as symbols, in his visions.[2]

It need hardly be said, that the scenery of a vision or waking dream can be only a picture of the brain. No one has ever fancied that any class of the blessed spirits before God have really such forms as Ezekiel describes. He simply adopted the materials which he found employed around him by degrading superstition, and through them, transferred the same ideas of guardianship to the throne of heaven, purifying these, as he did so, from the taint of all lower associations. That they are only symbols, is shewn, indeed, very strikingly by the fact that whereas, in one passage, the face of one of the four living creatures is said to have been that of an ox, in another it is described as that of a cherub.[3] It is singular and noteworthy, moreover, that a picture on an Assyrian cylinder, now in the British Museum,[4] presents a strange analogy to the details

[1] Dan. x. 9. [2] Dan. vii. 3, ff. [3] Ezek. i. 10; x. 14.
[4] Figured in Tomkins's *Life and Times of Abraham*, Plate III., figure K.

of the cherubic vision of Ezekiel. A mysterious vessel floats on waves expressed by undulating lines. It ends, at its prow and poop, in a human form, extending downwards to the waist. On the vessel itself two Kerubim, or winged bulls, stand back to back, and turn human faces to the spectator, their position involving the presence of two others behind them, to bear up the four corners of a flat surface which rests on their shoulders, and possibly corresponds to Ezekiel's firmament. From this rises a throne on which is seated a bearded god, clothed with a long and gorgeous robe, his head surmounted by a Babylonian tiara, and his extended hand holding a sceptre and a large circle or ring, which is without ornament. A smaller human figure, clothed with a long robe, stands before the god, to receive his commands—his angel, or *malach*, to use the Hebrew word; his *schickkal*, in the phrase of Assyria. He is the intermediary through whom mortals must approach the divinity.[1]. Overhead, at the sides, are two crescents, as if indications of heavenly bodies, and above these there still remain portions of an arch, which may have been the counterpart of Ezekiel's rainbow.

The human-headed bulls of Assyria and Babylon were set up, as has been said, at the gates of palaces and temples, as guardian genii, to watch over the buildings within, and keep back all forbidden persons. They were regarded as alive; a spirit being supposed to dwell in the huge stone forms. Similar existences, in living bodies, not prisoned in stone, were believed to guard the gates of the heavenly palaces of the gods, and those of the lower regions; these latter subterrestrial beings bearing up the earth on their

[1] Fried. Delitzsch compares this figure to the man clothed with linen, with a writer's inkhorn at his side, who carried out Jehovah's commands. Ezek. ix. 3. *Wo lag das Paradies?* p. 151.

backs, and guarding the entrance to the kingdom of the dead; as keepers of which, they were the objects of prayer.[1]

For seven days after the vision, Ezekiel tells us, he could do nothing, but sat among his people at Tel Abib, in lonely and desolate grief, like one mourning; his mind overwhelmed, for the time, alike by the awful vision he had seen and the greatness of the responsibility laid on him by his Divine commission as a prophet. Only at the end of a full week—the usual duration of excessive mourning[2]—was his silence disturbed, and then by the voice of God speaking in the stillness of his spirit. He had been set apart as the public servant of Jehovah, but he might not have fully realized what his office implied. Before he went forth to his brethren, Jehovah would have him feel its awful sacredness. Appointed to the ministry of His word among men, the interests of the souls of his hearers were intrusted to him. Let him ponder what is implied!

WINGED GENIUS, FROM THE TOMB OF CYRUS, AT MURGAB, THE ANCIENT PASARGADÆ. It has the head-dress and the ram's horns of the Egyptian god, Kneph, or Amon. Over it is the inscription, "I am Cyrus, the king, the Achæmenian." It is a portrait of Cyrus, deified. The inscription is in the three forms of cuneiform writing.—Justi, *Geschichte des Alten Persiens*, p. 47.

[1] On the whole subject of the cherubim, see Lenormant, *Les Origines de l'Histoire*, pp. 113-127. Dillmann, art. "Cherub," in *Bib. Lex.* Fried. Delitzsch, *Wo lag das Paradies?* pp. 150-155. Kurtz, art. "Cherubim," in Herzog. Engel, in Herzog, 2te auf.

[2] Job ii. 13.

Would that all who have the cure of souls in our own day took to themselves the warnings, uttered more than 2,000 years ago on the banks of the Chebar!

"III. 17. Son of man!' (spoke the Voice), I have appointed thee a watchman to the House of Israel: hear, then, the word from My mouth, and warn them from Me. 18. When I say to the wicked, 'Thou shalt surely die!' and you do not warn him (that I have done so), or speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, so that he may save his life, that wicked man shall die for his sin; but I will demand his blood from *you*.[2] 19. But if you have warned a wicked man, and he does not turn from his wickedness and his evil way, he will surely die for his sin; but you have saved your soul. 20. And, if a righteous man fall from his righteousness, and commits iniquity, and I cast a stumbling block before him, and he die; if you have not warned him, he, indeed, will die for his sin, and his righteous deeds will be forgotten; but I will demand his blood from *you!* 21. But if you have warned a righteous man to keep from sin, as becomes a righteous man, and he does keep from it, he shall assuredly live because he has been warned, and you will have saved your own soul!"

Thus cautioned, Ezekiel seems to have gone forth among the Hebrew community, as his order had always done, to urge on them the necessity of repentance and a better life, and to disenchant them of the idle dream that they would soon return to Judah, and find Jerusalem as they had left it. That they would remain in Babylonia seventy years, and that the Holy City would assuredly be destroyed for its sins, was, we may be assured, the burden of his addresses. But he spoke to men who bitterly resented predictions opposed to their cherished desires. The bitterness and glowing indignation of his soul[3] at their ungodliness, which doubtless shewed itself in his words and tone, instead of subduing them, only raised fierce opposition, before which he was powerless. It was impossible for him to get a hearing. So far as public ap-

[1] **Ezek. iii. 17-21.** [2] Literally, "from, or at your hand." [3] Ezek. iii. 14.

pearances were concerned, he could do nothing. Utterly discouraged, and at a loss how to fulfil his duty hereafter, he could only wait directions from God. Nor were those long withheld. While his soul still glowed with overpowering excitement at all the incidents of the recent past, a command came from Jehovah [1]—how recognized as such is not said—that he should go out from among the dwellings of men, to a valley at hand, and await Divine instructions. In this lonely spot the glory of Jehovah once more suddenly shone before him, resplendent as it had been on the banks of the Chebar, and, as then, he fell on his face to worship. Presently, however, he was raised and set on his feet by the same Divine power as in the former vision, and received orders to desist, henceforth, from any attempt to speak in public, except when specially directed to do so. From this time he was to stay quietly in his house. His brethren would not hear him, but by their resolute opposition would, as it were, lay chains on him, and bind him to the seclusion of his home. He was therefore to be silent, and cease from reproving them, because they were a House of Disobedience! Yet, when Jehovah opened his mouth, he was to go boldly among them, and tell them, "Thus says the Lord Jehovah," and he that heard might hear, and he that refused might refuse. From this time, therefore, till nearly the close of his prophecies,[2] we hear of no public activity on the part of the prophet, though he is often spoken of as announcing the word of God to those who came to him to hear it.[3]

The symbolical acts, parables, proverbs, poems, allegories, and direct prophecies, which constitute the remainder of

[1] **Ezek. iii. 22-27.** [2] Ezek. xxxiii. 22; **comp. xxiv. 27.**
[3] Ezek. viii.-xi. 12; xiv. 17; xviii. 20; **xxi. 5, 12; xxiv. 18, ff.**

his Book, must hence be conceived, for the most part, as communicated at first, only to the small groups who, from time to time, gathered in the house of the prophet. His life, in fact, was spent in private. Abroad, among men, he was but a citizen; only in the privacy of his dwelling was he a preacher.

The earliest instance left us of this quiet but effective activity shews that Ezekiel was in intense sympathy with Jeremiah, and offered unbending opposition to the ideas of his brethren in Babylon, as to their speedy return to Palestine. Symbolical actions, as we have seen, were not uncommon among the prophets, but with none were they so frequent as with Ezekiel. To impress on his neighbours the certain destruction of Jerusalem, in the face of all the predictions of the false prophets, he was directed[1] to represent the siege of Jerusalem, and all its miseries, by a series of emblematic actions. He was to take one of the common sun-dried bricks, of which nearly all the buildings around him were made, and draw on it the picture of Jerusalem, with all the circumstances of a siege; to raise works around the walls; to picture the usual wooden towers overlooking them; the huge mounds of earth enclosing the ramparts, from which the besiegers could assail the defenders; the encampments and attacking hosts; and the battering rams, to make breaches in the fortifications. This done, he was to set before the brick, the iron baking-plate of the household, to represent a wall of iron encircling the city and making escape hopeless, while he, himself, as the prophet and representative of Jehovah, was to press the siege. Seen by those who came to his house, it would, through them, be a sign to the Hebrew community at large.

[1] Ezek. iv. 1-3.

To this strange illustration of acted prophecy another was soon added.[1] To represent the wretched condition of the city, thus shut up, and the sufferings which Israel as a whole, in all its tribes, must bear, for their sins, he was directed to lie on his bed, like one chained to it by sickness or force; keeping himself for 390 days on his left side, to indicate, by a day for a year, the duration of the punishment of the Ten Tribes; and then 40 days on his right side, to symbolize as many years of visitation on the House of Judah; "setting his face," meanwhile, toward the pictured siege of Jerusalem, and baring his arm to indicate unimpeded action. In each case the iniquity of his brethren was to be assumed as metaphorically laid upon him. Such directions must not, however, be understood as required to be literally carried out by the prophet, for he could not have been called upon to endure the torture of never turning from one side for thirteen months together, an infliction inevitably fatal to any one. The whole must rather be taken as a parable, enacted from time to time, before the companies met at his house, and explained as the Divine intimation had directed.[2] To attempt to solve the full meaning of the symbolism is, however, a task, in which scholars have never agreed. The numbers given may have been clear to contemporaries, but to later ages they have only enforced Jerome's comparison of the prophet's writings to a "hopeless maze," "a labyrinth of the mysteries of God," or to the inextricable windings of the catacombs under Rome. Even the Jews, indeed, early de-

[1] **Ezek. iv. 4-8.**

[2] Cornelius a Lapide says: "The prophet cannot be understood to have lain in bed for 390 days, but lay down awake, as if besieging, or rather looking at the siege of, the city." Fairbairn says: "Few will be disposed to doubt that the successive actions took place only in vision." Ezekiel, moreover, is represented as *sitting* in his house before the days of his *lying* in bed could have been completed. **Chap. viii. 1.**

spaired so utterly of solving such dark questions, that they were inclined to exclude Ezekiel from the canon, had not Rabbi Chananiah, as the legend says, finally reconciled all discrepancies, and illuminated all difficulties, though at the cost of studies so protracted as to have required for his midnight lamp no fewer than 300 skin-bottles of oil.[1] One reference, however, of the 390 and 40 days—about 14 months[2]—seems clear, for they are expressly named "the days of the siege" of Jerusalem, which, in fact, lasted

[1] *Shabbath*, fol. 13, col. 2. The skin-bottle was the entire skin of a sheep or goat sewed together and made into a bottle or hanging jar.

[2] As it may interest readers to have some of the countless explanations given of the 390 and 40 years, I append the following:

(1.) THEODORET follows the reading of the Septuagint, which gives 150 days instead of 390, but retains the 40, making altogether 190. The 40 years he takes to be 40, yet wanting, of the 70 of the captivity of Judah; 30 years of it, in his opinion, having already passed. He reckons the period from the first prophesying of Ezekiel to the reign of Cyrus as 40 years! The 150 are obtained by running on to the twentieth year of Artaxerxes, in which Theodoret tells us Jerusalem was fully rebuilt.

(2.) Taking the numbers in the Hebrew Text—390 and 40 = 430—the following solutions among others have been offered. Some, says Jerome, thought the 430 years mean the period from the baptism of Christ to the end of the world. Others, especially Jews, he tells us, reckoned from the second year of Vespasian, when the temple was destroyed, supposing that 430 years of misery and captivity must be fulfilled by Israel, from that date, and thought that then the chosen people would be restored, as they of old were 430 years in Egypt (Exod. xii. 40).

(3.) EPHRAEM SYRUS reckons the 430 years from the first year of Solomon to the eleventh of Zedekiah, when the temple was burnt; a period, he says, of 433 years and 6 months.

(4.) JEROME reckons from the twentieth year of Pekah, in which he tells us Tiglath Pileser carried off the first captives from the Northern Kingdom. From this to the burning of the temple under Zedekiah he counts 164 years. Add 70 years for the Captivity, and we have 234 years. From this to the last year of Ahasuerus he counts 155 years and 4 months, and these added to the 234 years, make 389 years and 4 months. The 40 years he obtains "easily." From the reign of Jehoiachin to that of Cyrus is, as he calculates, just that period!

(5.) The later Rabbis reckon the 390 years from the entry of the Israelites into Canaan, giving 151 years to the Judges and 241 to the Kings of Israel, from Jeroboam to Hosea. 151 + 241 = 392. But they deduct the last year of Hosea, because he had been carried off from Samaria. The 391 left are reproduced by the round number 390. The 40 years are obtained by counting the first 16 years of Manasseh, during which idolatry was rampant, and then adding 24 as embracing the period from King Amon to the burning of the temple, the good reign of Josiah being passed over.

(6.) Others calculate the period from Jeroboam to the destruction of the temple as

nearly 18 months, including the time during which the Chaldæans interrupted it, to march against the Egyptian army.[1]

A third symbolical act of the prophet set forth the extremities to which Jerusalem would be reduced in the siege,[2] and the bitterness of the years of exile. He was to take grain and leguminous food of all kinds, from the best to the poorest—wheat, barley, beans, lentiles, millet, and vetches, and mixing them all, make bread of them for the 390 days of the typical siege. Such food was in itself unclean, by the mixture of which it was made; a very serious matter to a strict priest like Ezekiel.[3] Of this he was to eat only the weight of twenty shekels, or 12 ounces troy, a day, while the water he was to drink daily was to be only the sixth of a hin, or a pint and a half;[4] terribly little in so warm a climate. The utter want of all firing in Jerusalem during the siege, was to be indicated by the most revolting materials being used to bake the bread of each day. In treeless regions like the deserts of Africa or Arabia, or the steppes

390 years, and the 40 years from the thirteenth year of Josiah, in which Jeremiah began to preach, to the burning of the temple.

(7.) Our ordinary chronology gives a period of 390 years from Rehoboam to the burning of the temple, B.C. 977–587.

The 40 years in the wilderness are thought by not a few to have been in the mind of Ezekiel in speaking of Judah, but I do not myself see the connection. 390 added to 40 make 430, the length of the sojourn in Egypt. Exod. xii. 40, 41. Gal. iii. 17.

Rosenmüller (*Scholia in Ezek.*, pp. 107–117), gives extracts from the Fathers from which I have condensed these memoranda. His own explanation is ingenious. He finds the 390 *years* in the period from Rehoboam to the burning of the temple under Zedekiah; the 390 *days*, as follows: From the 4th of the 9th month, in which the siege began (2 Kings xxv. 1; Jer. xxxix. 1; lii. 4), to the 4th of the 9th month of the eleventh year of Zedekiah, on which it ended (2 Kings xxv. 3; Jer. xxxix. 2; lii. 6), are 530 days of a lunar year. From this he deducts 100 days, as the time during which the Chaldæans intermitted the siege, when marching against the Egyptian army, and thus gets 430, which includes the 390 of Israel, and the 40 of Judah. This 430, he notices, was the time assigned to the stay of the Hebrews in Egypt.

[1] Jos., *Ant.*, X. viii. 1.
[2] Ezek. iv. 9–17.
[3] Lev. xix. 19.
[4] Conder's *Handbook*, p. 81.

of Asia, the dried dung of sheep, goats, camels, or oxen, is the ordinary fuel,[1] supplemented, as far as possible, by any stalks or weeds obtainable. Camel's dung is regularly used for fuel by the Arabs, and one sees, everywhere, in Egypt and Palestine, round cakes of cow dung, kneaded by the women and girls, laid out to dry in the sun, or piled up for use. The round, flat "bannocks" of bread common in the East, are very generally baked by putting them into the embers of such a fire, which is quite as good for the purpose, in every way, as any other fuel, and in no degree affects the purity or taste of the bread.[2] But a fire even of such squalid materials was to be represented as beyond the means of the besieged, and Ezekiel was to prepare his pittance, by laying it in the ashes of a much more offensive fire. Thus would the Hebrews, he was told, "eat defiled and abominable bread, among the heathen nations to whom they would be driven," as had been foretold already by Amos and Hosea.[3] But the very thought of Levitically polluting himself, even by a symbolical act, was intolerable to the priestly feelings of the prophet. It would not defile him to eat bread baked with the dried dung of oxen or other animals, for the ashes of such fuel in no way affect what is baked in them by it, but bread made as proposed would be "unclean." "Ah Lord Jehovah," cried he, therefore, in distress, "behold, my soul has not hitherto been defiled by my eating anything ceremonially unclean; for, from my youth up, I have never eaten the flesh of that which died of itself, or had been torn in pieces by wild beasts; nor has any unclean flesh come into my mouth."[4]

[1] Layard's *Nineveh and Babylon*, p. 288.
[2] 1 Kings xvii. 12. Isa. xliv. 15. Jer. vii. 18.
[3] Amos vii. 17. Hos. ix. 3.
[4] To speak thus, Ezekiel must have been well acquainted with the Levitical legisla-

Fuel of cow dung, such as was common, was, in consequence, substituted, and the solemn words added, that Jehovah would break the staff of bread in Jerusalem; bread, like the staff in a man's hand, being that on which the citizen leaned for support. Their bread would be eaten by weight, and their water measured out to them, and drunk in terror, to let them pine away for their iniquity.

Still another sign, however, was to be given,[1] that by one or other, the dark prospect before both the exiles and Judah, might be realized. Ezekiel was to take a barber's knife, and shave off his hair and his beard. Himself representing the city, his hair was to stand for its inhabitants, and its being cut off, the shame and ruin before Jerusalem.[2] The hair, moreover, was to be destroyed in various ways, to shew the different modes in which the Divine judgments were to strike the guilty people. A third part was to be burnt with fire, in the midst of his picture of the city, when the days marking the duration of the siege were over; a third was to be cut to pieces; and the last third to be scattered in the wind. A few hairs only, and these counted, so few their number, were to be bound up in his skirts, but even of them, he was afterwards to burn some. Then came the solemn words:

"V. 5. Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: This is (the fate of) Jerusalem. I have set her in the centre of the nations, and of their lands round about it.[3] 6. But she has rebelled against My laws more than

tion, contrary to the new criticism, which supposes it was not invented till after his day. See Lev. xvii. 15. Exod. xxii. 31. Deut. xiv. 21. Lev. v. 2; vii. 24; xxii. 8; xi. 39, ff; vii. 18; xix. 7; xxvi. 26, 39. These laws must, moreover, have been rigidly observed by strict Jews. So much for the late origin of the Pentateuch.

[1] **Ezek. v. 1-6.** [2] 2 Sam. x. 4. Isa. vii. 20.

[3] The Jews believed from this verse that Jerusalem was the centre of the world (Buxtorff, *Lex. Chal.*, p. 854), as the Greeks supposed of Delphi, the seat of Apollo. Cic., *De Divina.*, ii. 56. Ovid., *Metam.*, x. 167. Theodoret dwells on this imaginary

the heathen,[1] and against My statutes more than the lands round about her: for her people have despised My laws, and as to My statutes, they have not walked in them!

"7. Therefore thus says the Lord Jehovah:[2] Because you have been much worse in your rebelliousness than the heathen nations round about you;[3] because you have not walked in My statutes, nor kept My laws, but have done according to the laws of the heathen nations round you—8. therefore, thus says the Lord Jehovah: Behold, I, even I, am against thee, and will execute judgments in the midst of thee, before the eyes of the nations. 9. I will do in thee what I have never done, and the like of which I will never again do, because of all thy abominations! 10. Fathers will eat their children in the midst of thee, and children will eat their fathers, and I will execute judgments on thee, and scatter[4] all that remain of thy people to the four winds![5]

"11. As I live, saith the Lord Jehovah—because thou (Jerusalem) hast polluted my sanctuary with all thy detestable idols, and all thy abominations (of heathenism), I will, assuredly, shear thee away (as My prophet's hair has been shorn off);[6] My eye will not spare, nor will I have any pity! 12. A third part of thee will die of the plague, and be consumed by famine, in the midst of thee; a third part will fall by the sword (that shall be) round about thee; and the last third will I scatter to all the winds, and unsheathe a sword behind them. 13. Thus will I exhaust My indignation upon her, and then (first), when My fury has fallen on them,[7] will I feel satisfied,[8] for they will then know that I, Jehovah, spoke in earnest,[9] when I have spent My fury on them!

"14. Thus (O Jerusalem) will I make thee a waste, and a mockery among the nations round about thee, before the eyes of all that pass

fact in his commentary on the text. See also, Reland's *Palestine*, Bk. I. chap. x., and Jarchi on this place. A spot fancied to be the centre of the world is still shewn in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem. The Arabs think Mecca the centre of the world, and the Parsi fancies the sacred mount Albirsch has the honour of being so. See Gesenius, *Jesaia*, vol. i. p. 179.

[1] She has wickedly exchanged My laws for those of the nations. Ewald.

[2] **Ezek. v. 7-14.**

[3] Because ye have reckoned yourselves as among the nations. Ewald, from Peshito.

[4] As men throw abroad the chaff with a winnowing shovel, on the threshing floor on the top of windy hills.

[5] Literally, "to all the winds."

[6] The verb means primarily, "to scrape off," "to shave off."

[7] Or, cooled itself on them.

[8] Literally, "be comforted."

[9] Literally, "in zeal."

by. 15. And thou shalt be a contempt and a reviling,[1] an example, and an astonishment, to the nations round about thee, when I execute judgments on thee, in anger and in wrath, and in the chastisements of My fury. I, Jehovah, say it! 16. Yes! I will send the deadly arrows of famine among them, which will destroy them, for I send them for that purpose; famine on famine will I bring on you, and break your staff of bread! 17. Famine and wild beasts will I send among you, to make you childless! pestilence and blood will assail you, and I will bring the sword on you! I, Jehovah, have said it!"

[1] **Ezek. v. 15–17.**

CHAPTER XX.

THE FIRST YEARS OF THE EXILE.

THE first twenty-four chapters of Ezekiel throw much light on the state of things among the exiles in Babylonia, in the years preceding the siege of Jerusalem. A close connection was kept up between them and the capital. Constant communications passed and repassed,[1] and the tenderest sympathy bound together the widely separated communities. On the banks of the Chebar, the banished Hebrews seemed to think, or speak, only of the hills and valleys of Judah, the final and utter desolation of which they could not bring themselves to believe. Jehovah would surely appear to save Israel, His first-born,[2] from the oppressor!

It was given to Ezekiel, as the mouthpiece of God, to dispel this illusion, time after time, by earnest assurances that they were deceiving themselves with false hopes, and that, instead of triumph, the most terrible doom hung over the community in Palestine. That of Jerusalem he had already proclaimed in a succession of prophetic acts, which brought it before their own eyes, as it were, by the

[1] Travelling seems to have been quite safe under the Chaldæans. See p. 345. It had been the same under the Assyrians. Thus, in the reign of Assurbanipal, a man appeared in Nineveh in strange dress, speaking a language no one understood, and it was only found out after some days that he was an ambassador from the distant kingdom of Lydia, in Asia Minor. Smith's *Assyria*, p. 147.

[2] Exod. iv. 22.

me. vivid symbols; but Judah, as a whole, had hitherto escaped. Soon, however, it, also, had to be bewailed, as destined to a fate equally sad. To Ezekiel it must have been distressing in the extreme to utter such dismal predictions of ruin; but, like Jeremiah, he had no choice, when the commission to do so came from above. The following is the first prophecy in which the Jewish State was set before the exiles of Chebar, as under sentence of final destruction.

"VI. 2. Son of man,[1] set thy face against the mountains of Israel and preach against them,[2] 3. and say—Ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord Jehovah! Thus says the Lord Jehovah to the mountains, and to the hills, to the torrent beds, and to the valleys, —Behold, I will bring war against you, and will destroy your 'high places.'[3] 4. And your altars shall be laid desolate; your sun-pillars shall be broken; and I will cast down your slain men before your disgusting gods,[4] 5. lay the carcasses of the sons of Israel before them,[5] and scatter their bones round your altars! 6. Wherever you live, your towns shall be laid waste, and the high places made desolate, that your altars may be left without drink offerings[6] and forlorn, and your disgusting idols be broken and cease, and your sun-pillars cut down, and the images, the work of your hands, destroyed! 7. And the slain will fall in your midst, and ye shall know that I Jehovah (have spoken).[7] 8. Yet I shall leave a remnant who have escaped the sword and live among the nations, when ye are scattered through the countries, 9. and your fugitives shall think of Me among the heathen, whither they have been carried captive; when their unfaithful hearts, which have departed from Me, shall feel broken, and their

[1] **Ezek. vi. 1-9.**

[2] "Thou hast appointed prophets to *preach* of thee, etc." Neh. vi. 7.

[3] They had raised them again since they had been destroyed by Josiah. See Deut. xii. 2. Lev. xxvi. 30.

[4] Literally, "dung gods." Mühlau und Volck. For "disgusting gods," the reader may substitute "dung gods," throughout.

[5] Smend. Henderson. [6] Literally, "dry."

[7] Eichhorn, Ewald, and Smend, join the first word of ver. 8 to the end of ver. 7, and make it read "have spoken." It seems a judicious emendation, involving only a very slight change of the letters.

eyes which lusted after their disgusting gods; when they shall .the themselves[1] for the wickedness which they have committed in all their abominable rites—10. then they will know that I, Jehovah,[2] ha e not spoken vainly, when I threatened to do evil to them!

"11. Thus says the Lord Jehovah: Smite (your thigh) with your hand, and stamp with your foot (to shew your indignation![3]) and say: 'Alas for all the abominations of the House of Israel!' For they shall fall by the sword, the famine, and the pestilence. 12. He that is far off will die by the pestilence; he that is near, by the sword; and he that is left, and he that is besieged, shall die by the famine; and I will exhaust My fury on them, 13. that they may know that I am Jehovah! When your slain lie among your disgusting gods, round about your altars, on every high hill, on the top of the mountains, and under every green tree and every thick leaved oak—where they offered fragrant incense to all these disgusting gods—14. when I stretch out My hand upon them and make the land waste and desolate, from the wilderness (in the south) to Riblah (on the north[4])—then shall they know that I am Jehovah!"

That preaching like this, though only heard at first by the small audiences in the prophet's own dwelling, should have remained without result, when spread by report through the community, shews how completely the sanctions of the ancient national faith had lost their hold on the people at large. The prophet of God was utterly discredited. Faith in Jehovah was practically extinct. To rekindle it would be possible only by the bitter experience of a long captivity. But, if without influence at the moment, the time would come when the return of better feeling would make such warnings and reproaches of supreme value, in recalling the deep sinfulness of the past. Although, therefore, he spoke, for the time, as if to the

[1] Literally, "their own faces." [2] Ezek. vi. 10-14. [3] Jerome, *in loc.*

[4] It is Diblah in the Hebrew text. But no place called Diblah is known, and Diblathaim in Moab does not suit the connection. Riblah is in four MSS., and was adopted by Jerome among ancients, as well as by Gesenius, Mühlau, Hitzig, Ewald, and Smend among moderns.

idle air, the prophet constantly returns to the subject, that his own conscience, at least, might be clear, when the catastrophe arrived. He knew, perhaps, that his words were carried back to Palestine, and that he thus spoke to those immediately in danger, as well as to his brethren in Babylonia. One of these additional warnings ran thus. The word of Jehovah, he told his hearers, had come to him, saying :[1]

"VII. 2. Thou son of man, thus saith the Lord Jehovah to the land of Israel : The end comes ; it comes upon the four corners of the land! 3. It is now upon thee ! I will send out My anger against thee, and will judge thee according to thy ways, and lay upon thee the punishment of all thy abominations. 4. My eyes shall have no compassion on thee, neither shall I pity thee, but I will lay the punishment of thy ways upon thee, and that of thy abominations shall come into thy midst—that ye may know that I am Jehovah!

"5. Thus says the Lord Jehovah: A calamity, a great calamity, see, it comes! 6. An end, the (predicted) end, comes! (It has slumbered long, but now) it awakes against thee! See, it comes! 7. Thy fate[2] steals upon thee, O thou dweller in the land (of Judah)! The time is at hand! The day of tumult on the mountains, not of rejoicings, is near! 8. Now will I presently pour out My fury upon thee, and let loose My anger on thee, to judge thee according to thy ways, and lay on thee the punishment of all thy abominations! 9. And My eye shall have no compassion on thee, neither will I have pity. I will render to thee according to thy ways and thy abominations in the midst of thee —that ye may know that I, Jehovah, smite!

"10. Behold the day! See, it comes! Fate quickens into life (like the bud of spring); the rod of vengeance buds; (the) haughtiness (of Chaldæa) blossoms; 11. their fierceness has shot up into a rod to punish (the) wickedness (of the people of Judah)! Nothing shall remain of them, nor of their multitude, nor of their substance, neither shall there be any (funeral) wailing for them! 12. The time is come! The day draws near! The buyer need not rejoice, nor the seller grieve, for

[1] **Ezek. vii. 1-12.**

[2] So Theodoret, De Wette, Winer, Ewald, Keil, Gesenius, Hitzig, Hengstenberg. The word is Tsephirah, which means a circle or cycle. It is thus—thy turn or time has come.

fury descends on the whole people![1] 13. For he who has been forced (by his exile) to sell (all he had), will not return to (buy back) what he sold, though he still live; for the vision (of calamity) includes the whole population (of Judah);[2] no one (of the exiles) will return, and no one (in Jerusalem), with all his unrighteous gain (from the forced sales of the property of his banished brethren), will be able to keep to himself[3] even his life.

"14. They blow the trumpet (in Jerusalem), and make all ready for war; (but their courage fails:) no one marches out to the battle; for My wrath is on all the multitude in the city. 15. The sword is outside, pestilence and famine within! He that is in the field will die by the sword; he that is in the city, him will famine and pestilence devour. 16. And any that escape will be on the mountains like (the moaning) doves of the cliffs, sighing, every one, for his sin! 17. All hands will hang down powerless, all knees be like water (that flows trembling away). 18. They will gird themselves with (the) sackcloth (of mourning); trembling will seize their whole frame;[4] despair will be on all faces, and baldness on all heads.[5] 19. They will throw their silver into the streets, and their gold will become an abhorrence, for neither silver nor gold will be able to save them in the day of the wrath of Jehovah, for it will neither satisfy their souls, nor fill their (hungry) bodies; (they will hate their wealth for deceiving the trust put in it:) through it, they fell into sin.[6] 20. The costly ornaments used for pomp, and the images of their abominable and hateful idols, made (from their wealth), I will turn to be their abhorrence, 21. and I will give the city to the barbarians for booty, and to the wicked of the earth for spoil, and they shall pollute it.

"22. I will also turn away My face from them, and the heathen will pollute (even the temple—My unapproachable seat[7]); the robber will press into it, and defile it. 23. Forge the chains (to lead off My people captive)! For the land is full of deeds of blood, and the city is full of violence. 24. For this I will bring the worst of the heathen, that

[1] Literally, "her crowd or multitude," *i.e.*, the multitude in the land.

[2] Smend. The exiles had been forced to sell their property in Jerusalem for next to nothing. But they will never return to claim the Jewish right of redemption of family land. **Ezek. vii. 13–24.**

[3] Literally, "strengthen."

[4] Literally, "covers them."

[5] To shave the head was a sign of the deepest mourning, and had become a long established custom, in spite of the prohibitions in Lev. xix. 28; Deut. xiv. 1, etc. See Mic. i. 16.

[6] Paraphrased slightly.

[7] Primarily, "concealed;" then, "not to be approached."

they may take their houses in possession; and I will cause their insolent pride to cease, and their holy places shall be defiled! 25. Destruction[1] comes! They seek safety, but in vain! 26. Calamity will follow calamity, and evil tidings press after evil tidings. Then (at last) will they seek heavenly guidance[2] from the prophet, for counsel will no longer be obtainable from the priest, or sound advice from the experienced old.[3] 27. The king will shew himself in sackcloth, and the chief men be clothed with speechless terror, and the hands of the common people sink down powerless. For I will deal with them according to their ways, and judge them according to their deserts,[4] that they may know that I am Jehovah!"

The eighth chapter of Ezekiel throws interesting light on the mental phenomena of Hebrew prophecy. In the sixth year of his exile from Jerusalem—that is, in B.C. 592—somewhere about September—the fifth day of the sixth month, Elul—the prophet was sitting in his house speaking with the exiled elders of Judah, who sat before him. The relations between him and the community had improved so far that, if he could not venture to speak in public, he was, now, at least, sought out in private by their chief men. The crushing of open conspiracy among the captives by the vigorous action of the Babylonian government, had resulted in their being slighted by their brethren still left in Judah, who affected to sneer at what they chose to think their cowardice, in quietly submitting to the Chaldæan, after all their boasting. Proud in the possession of their city and temple, the men of Jerusalem despised the exiles,[5] who, in their turn, had envied the lot of their brethren at home as apparently happier than their own. But the predictions of the fall of the capital

[1] From the verb "to roll together," like a weaver's web. **Ezek. vii. 25-27.**

[2] Literally, "a vision," or "revelation."

[3] The priests will have no "Torah" for such circumstances; and even the old, "the bearers of wisdom," will be at their wits' end. The "Torah" will perish from the one, and counsel from the other.

[4] Literally, "judgments." [5] **Ezek. xi. 15.**

seemed less intolerable since its bearing to them was changed. The prospects of return were growing fainter. Personal interest in the welfare of a place which might never be seen again was insensibly weakened. Such a mood was favourable to the prophet, with whom the Captivity was the divinely-appointed means for the religious revival of his people, and he therefore eagerly hailed any advances on their side.

Things were passing from bad to worse in Jerusalem. Idolatry was growing more gross and varied. The sins of the inhabitants were rapidly wearing out the Divine long-suffering. If anything could shock the exiles, and lead them to better thoughts, it would be to have the moral decay of the mother city brought vividly before them. Their national pride would surely revolt at the thought of Israel casting off the mighty Jehovah, and sinking to the level of the heathen whom they formerly despised.

It is almost impossible to realize what may, perhaps, without offence be called the mental and spiritual exaltation which made visions like those seen by Ezekiel possible. They remind us of Balaam's "hearing the words of God, and seeing the vision of the Almighty," "falling down, but having his eyes open;"[1] or of St. Paul's ecstasy, in which —"whether in the body or out of the body," he could not tell—he saw "visions and revelations,"[2] in which he appeared to be caught up to the third heaven, to Paradise, and heard unspeakable words; or of the wondrous vision of St. Peter, when, being "very hungry," he "fell into a trance," or ecstasy,[3]—the state of being *out of* one's usual mind, or the *stretching out* of the ordinary faculties—a *standing out* of one's self—and saw the heavens opened.

[1] Num. xxiv. 4. [2] 2 Cor. xii. 1, 2. [3] This is the Greek word.

But whatever physical or mental conditions were involved, the whole nature of the prophet must have been kindled to a spiritual fervour and concentration, such as we read of only in the history of a few great saints, while they were under intense religious excitement.[1]

Suddenly, then, while conversing with the elders, "the hand of the Lord Jehovah fell," or descended, "on him,"[2] and forthwith the vision of the Almighty appeared, seated above the cherubim,[3] as he had seen it before. There was the same likeness of a man[4] clothed with fiery brightness from his waist downward, and shining from thence upward, with the yellow radiance of gold and silver.[5] A hand now

[1] For example, the trance of Mr. Grimshaw, Perpetual Curate of Haworth, 1742–1763. "On Sunday, September 2, 1744, his maid-servant was called up at five o'clock in the morning, but found that her master had risen before her, and was retired into a private room for prayer. After remaining there some time, he went to a house in Haworth, where he was engaged a while in religious exercises with some of his people. He then returned home, and retired for prayer again, and from thence went to church. She believes he had not eaten anything that morning. While reading the second lesson, he fell down, but was soon helped and led out of church. He continued to talk to the people as he went, and desired them not to disperse, as he hoped he should return to them soon, and he had something extraordinary to say to them. They led him to the clerk's house, where he lay seemingly insensible. She, with others, were employed in rubbing his limbs (which were exceedingly cold) with warm cloths. After some time, he came to himself, and seemed to be in great rapture. The first words he spoke were—'I have had a glorious vision from the Third Heaven.' But she does not remember that he made any mention of what he had seen. In the afternoon he performed service at the church, which began at two o'clock, and spoke so long to the people that it was seven o'clock in the evening before he returned home." Newton's *Life of Grimshaw*, p. 36. Similar cases are recorded of Col. Gardner, and of Mr. Tennant of Georgia, among others, in recent times. Handel used to say that he did not know whether he was in the body or out of the body during the composition of the Hallelujah Chorus in the "Messiah," and Michael Angelo held that John of Fiesola could never have given the super earthly look to the Virgin in his picture of the Annunciation, had he not been raised above the sphere of the seen and earthly, at the moment of its conception. The heavens are nearer us than we think, and may open to pious souls in moments of transcendent spiritual exaltation, more frequently than we imagine. [2] **Ezek. viii. 1-4.** [3] Ezek. ix. 3.

[4] For fire (ver. 2) read "man." Septuagint. The word "fire" is *ĕsh*; the word for "man," *ĭsh*. Same long sound of "a" in both as in "ate."

[5] See p. 396. The Abbé Vigouroux thinks the Hebrew word (*Hasmal*) refers to the coloured enamel on the bricks of Babylon and Nineveh, which would flash resplendently in the light. *La Bible et les Découvertes Modernes*, vol. iv. p. 361.

seemed to be put forth and take hold of a lock of the prophet's hair, by which the Spirit appeared to lift him up, and bear him between earth and heaven; carrying him to Jerusalem, "in the visions of God," that is, as happens in a dream. There he was set down at the southern side of the gate of the priest's court of the temple,—within the inner sacred court, close to the spot where, on the other side of the gate, in the outer court, facing the north, Manasseh had raised a "hewn image of an Asherah,"[1] known since among the priests as "the image of jealousy;" its position beside the great altar, directly in front of the Holy Place, seeming a wilful defiance of Jehovah, "the jealous God."[2] The same awful glory of the God of Israel, with the attendant cherubim and wheels, which the prophet had seen in the valley at Chebar, seemed to have passed before him to Jerusalem, and shone around him once more in the temple. Directed to look to the north,[3] he did so, and saw the "image of jealousy" standing close to the gate, on its outer or north side, the chief object before all the people, for it had been erected again since the death of Josiah. "Do you see," said the Vision, "what My people do—the gross abominations committed here by the House of Israel, in worshipping this Asherah in My very House, as if to drive Me far off from My sanctuary? But turn once more, and you will see still greater abominations." The prophet was then brought to the north side of the archway of the gate at which he had been standing. A large chamber lay next this passage on the east side, the archway forming its western wall, which,

[1] 2 Kings xxi. 7. The word "graven image" in our version (*pesel*) means an image cut in wood, or of metal, or of stone. In this case it was of wood.

[2] Exod. xx. 5; xxxiv. 14. Deut. iv. 24, 25; vi. 15. Isa. xlii. 8.

[3] **Ezek. viii. 5-12.**

as he came near, shewed an opening in it, at one spot. "Dig through this," said the Voice, and Ezekiel did so. It proved to be an ancient doorway that had been closed up, perhaps, in the time of Josiah's Reformation, and led into a chamber large enough to let at least seventy men move in it freely. Here the sight was still more distressing than that of the Asherah. The chamber was dark,[1] but artificial light shewed that its walls were covered, like those of the similarly dark chambers of Egyptian temples and tombs, with paintings of beast-gods of every form, from creeping things upwards. "These pictures, round about," said the Voice, "are all the idols of the House of Israel."[2] The strong Egyptian faction in Jerusalem, in their degrading imitation of foreign manners, had introduced the animal worship of the Nile Valley, and had even turned a large room in the temple into a chapel for its services.[3] But still worse, he saw in vision, in this chamber, seventy of the elders of Judah, the leaders of the people, the very men who should have discountenanced idolatry, standing before the hideous brute gods on the walls, each man with a censer in his hand, offering incense to them. Laymen as they were, they had taken possession of a chamber in the court of the priests, and had appropriated the

[1] Ezek. viii. 12.

[2] One would have thought there could have been no question of the meaning of the words of this phrase as given in the A. V. (Ezek. viii. 12)—"all the idols of the House of Israel." The new criticism speaks of these as "totems." A totem is the god of rude tribes in America, Australia, the islands of the South Pacific, and in Central Asia. It may be an animal, vegetable, or dead object; but whatever it is, the tribe is called after it, as one tribe among the North American Indians is called "the Wolf," another "the Bear," and so on. Will any human being tell what possible support such an astounding assertion has from the simple words of Ezekiel? The word for idols in the text means "shapeless blocks of wood," "logs."

[3] Egyptian worship was held in many cases in dark chambers, the walls of which were covered with hieroglyphics and paintings of animal gods of all forms. See *Diod. Sic.*, vol. i. p. 59, ed. Wess. *Amm. Marcell.*, B. xxii. See vol. ii. p. 26.

priestly censers for this vile use. Nor was this the only spot in the temple thus desecrated; each of these worshippers had a chamber of imagery for himself, among the now otherwise unused halls and cells of the sanctuary.[1] To add to his pain, Ezekiel saw among these apostates a son of Shaphan—to whom Hilkiah had brought the Book of the Law, in the eighteenth year of Josiah—and a brother of Ahikam, the friend and protector of Jeremiah, and father of the godly but unfortunate Gedaliah.[2] So deeply had the canker of idolatry penetrated society. Here, in the dark of their idol chapel, the apostates fancied themselves unseen by Jehovah. "He had forsaken the land," they said, "and did not see them."

The next scene in the vision is curiously illustrated by archæological relics from the Euphrates. A seal has been found which, curiously, bears the name of Amotz, the scribe, the same name as that of the father of Isaiah. It belonged, apparently, to a Jewish exile, of the time of Sennacherib or Esarhaddon, and shews that its owner had conformed to the prevailing sun worship. The winged solar disk is above an altar on it, and a priest, with a flounced dress, stands on one side, while the owner of the seal stands on the other. Various Jewish seals, of the same age and locality, shew a similar turning of their owners to idolatry.

Thus not only were the foul Asherah of the Phœnicians, and the beast-gods of Egypt, worshipped in the temple—even the sun worship of the East had also found a footing in its courts, as the Vision was now to shew. Guided by it,[3] the prophet proceeded to the outer north gate of the people's court, and there saw women, sitting in the black

[1] Ezek. viii. 12. [2] Jer. xxxix. 14; xxvi. 24. [3] Ezek. viii. 13-16.

weeds of mourning, making loud laments for the death of the Syrian sun-god Tammuz or Adonis, whose festival they were thus keeping ;[1] the wailing for his death being only

[1] A mythological poem bequeathed to us by ancient Babylonia, recounts the descent of the goddess Istar, into Hades, in search of healing waters, which should restore life to her bridegroom, Tammuz, the young and beautiful sun-god ; slain by the cruel hand of night and winter. On the one hand, we thus see who was that Tammuz, in whose honour Ezekiel saw the women of Jerusalem weeping, at the gate of the temple (Ezek. viii. 14). On the other, it is clear that the Tammuz and Istar of the Babylonian legend, are the Adonis and Aphrodite of the Greeks. All over Western Asia the women bewailed the death of Adonis ; a name equivalent to the Phœnician Adoni, "my lord ;" the cry with which the worshippers of the stricken sun-god lamented his descent into the lower world. It was only too familiar in Palestine. They "mourned for Hadad-Rimmon," each year in the valley of Megiddo, by the plain of Jezreel (Zech. xii. 11), while Amos heard the men of Israel mourning for the "only son" (Amos viii. 10), and Jeremiah the prophet, in Judah, gives the very words of the refrain : "Ah me, my brother, and ah me, my sister ! Ah me, Adonis, and ah me, his lady" (Jer. xxii. 18). After the revolt of Egypt from the Assyrian king, and the rise of the 26th dynasty, the cult of Adonis entered on a new phase. His story was identified with that of the Egyptian Osiris. As the sun-god Osiris had been slain, and had risen again from the dead, so, too, had the Phœnician Adonis descended into Hades, and been rescued again from its grasp. And so it came about that a new feature was added to the festival of Adonis ; the days of mourning were followed by days of rejoicing ; the death of Adonis was followed by the announcement of his resurrection. Ezekiel saw the women weeping for Tammuz in "the sixth month." In Babylonia, Tammuz was the sun-god of spring ; his foe was the summer heat ; his death was mourned in June. Istar is the goddess with whom Tammuz is associated. But at Hierapolis, this goddess seems to have borne the name of Semiramis, and as that of Istar travelled to the west, away from its old association with Chaldæa, it was transformed into the Ashtoreth of the Old Testament, and of Phœnician monuments, and into the Astarte of the Greeks. She thus ceased to be the pure goddess of the evening star, and became the feminine development of the life-giving sun-god, and the patroness of love, in whose honour and that of her consort, Baal, abominations, denounced by the prophets, were committed within the sacred precincts of the temple itself. Jerome tells us that the rites of Tammuz were celebrated at Bethlehem in his own time. The sacred cave there, for ages regarded as the birthplace of Christ, has been degraded by a recent fanciful writer into the "chapel," or sacred cave, "of Moloch," or of Tammuz ; such a cave playing an important part in sun worship, and Jerome's remark about Tammuz worship requiring it ! There is, however, always a sacred cave connected with the traces of sun temples in Syria, as if the ancient idea had been, that the sun issued from a cave, at its return from the darkness of winter. The Akkadian name for the month of the winter solstice, indeed, is, "the Cavern of the Dawn." Temples of Ashtoreth and Chemosh stood on Mount Olivet, in Solomon's time, and a cave or vault, below a small sanctuary yet remaining on its top, may be a last trace of them. At Bethel, there is a curious circle of stones, immediately north of the village, reminding one of the rude stone temples of our own country. Traces of a similar circle were found also, south-east of Jenin, with a rude stone monument which has every appearance of being an

a prelude to the obscene rejoicings which greeted his return as the Sun of Spring. But great as was this abomination,

ancient altar. The tomb of Joseph is flanked by two pillar-like altars, on which sacrifices are still offered by fire. Even the Jews sacrifice articles by fire at the tomb of Ben Jochai, on Jebel Jermuk, the highest mountain of Central Galilee. A rude cromlech in that district, is known as the "Stone of blood." Many sacred stones, indeed, occur through the whole country. On Hermon, the great centre of sun worship, remains of numerous sun temples have been found; all facing the rising sun. On an isolated hillock at Tyre, there is a sacred building, still called the "The Beloved of women:" from Adonis or Melkarth. The inhabitants of Northern Lebanon worship the sun, moon, and elements, even now, and Conder thinks it not too much to say, that every isolated round or conical hill top in Palestine was once the seat of sun worship.

The wailing devotees of the lost Tammuz, in the late pagan times, at Harran, were wont to eat only dried fruits, and to abstain from corn-meal. In the absence of the god, they would not partake of his special gift. The myth of Tammuz seems still preserved at Neby Mashuk, where, in the middle of July, the Tyrians celebrate the feast of Sheik Mashuk, whose tomb lies near that of his wife, on the hillock. In this connection, the translation of a verse of Proverbs, by St. Jerome, throws light on a curious feature of the heathenism still existing, in his day, at Bethlehem. In Proverbs xxvi. 8, the words, "Like him who throws a stone on the back of Mercury," are substituted for "As he that bindeth a stone in a sling, so is he that giveth honour to a fool." The worship of a deity by throwing stones at him seems very senseless, but it is often alluded to in the Talmud.

The sacred stones, in monoliths, cromlechs, dolmens, or circles, connected with sun worship, are very rare west of the Jordan, perhaps from the Jews having destroyed memorials so closely associated with the idolatry of the ancient races. In Galilee, however, where Jewish influence was, probably, never predominant, until a late period, a few still exist, but in Moab and the Jordan valley they are wonderfully numerous. Among these, we find structures, which probably resemble the early altars and pillars, mentioned in Scripture, still existing at places, which, on entirely independent grounds, may be identified as the Mizpeh of Jacob, and the holy mountains, Nebo and Baal-Peor. It is curious to notice, moreover, that all ancient religious monuments or structures, whether rude or elaborate, are always favourite places of burial. Stone monuments and tombs, or temples and tombs, are as constantly associated as cathedrals and tombs.

A special interest attaches to the incident mentioned of Josiah, when overthrowing the idolatrous altars and emblems at Bethel, having his attention arrested by the monumental pillar, over the grave of the prophet. It shews that there was a connection between pillars used for idolatrous worship, such as the Israelites threw down, and similar pillars, used as head-stones at graves. The occurrence of cup-shaped hollows, suited for libations, in some stones of this kind, and on rock altars, as, for example, on the Sakrah at Jerusalem and the stones at Mount Gerizim, is a strange memento of long past ages. Blood was, at times, poured out on these stones and altars, thus hollowed on the top, and it has been thought that their Arabic name "Mareighat," "smeared," may refer to this practice, unless, indeed, the word refers to smearing with oil: reminding us of Jacob's stone at Bethel, of the ambrosial stones of Tyre, and other stones of many countries, wont to be similarly anointed.

a still greater remained. From the outer court, Ezekiel was brought into the inmost, beside the great brazen altar. There, at the very door of the temple building, between the projecting porch of the Holy Place and the altar which stood immediately in front of it, the crowning desecration presented itself. In this, the very holiest spot of the sanctuary,[1] about twenty-five men, presumably representatives of the high priest and of the heads of the twenty-four courses[2]—for already in Uzziah's time laymen could not enter this sacred space[3]—stood with their backs to the temple—the open sign of apostasy[4]—and worshipped the rising sun, their faces turned to the east.

"Son of man," said the Voice,[5] "hast thou seen this? Is it too small a thing to the House of Judah to commit the abominations they do here? Must they also fill the land with violence, as they have done, and constantly provoke Me to anger; and see, now, like the Eastern heathen, they hold the twig to their nose as they worship the sun.[6] I will, therefore, deal with them in fury; My eye shall not pity, nor will I spare them, and even if they cry in My ears with a loud voice, imploring mercy, I will not hear them!"

Having disclosed the profound corruption of the people of Judah and Jerusalem, the vision now, by a vivid image, foreshadowed the terrible penalty to be exacted. The Divine Voice was heard commanding aloud,[7] "Draw near, ye that are to punish[8] the city; every man with the weapon

[1] Joel ii. 17. [2] 2 Chron. xxxvi. 14. [3] 2 Chron. xxvi. 18.
[4] 2 Chron. xxix. 6. Isa. i. 4. Jer. vii. 24. [5] **Ezek. viii. 17, 18.**
[6] The Persians, while they prayed to the sun, held twigs of date, granate, and tamarisk, in their left hand, and the priests wore a veil, that their breath might not pollute the Holy One. Spiegel, *Erân. Alter.*, vol. iii. p. 571. The Ssabeans did the same. Chwolson, *Die Ssabier*, vol. ii. pp. 384, 393, 199, ff. Lenormant's *La Divination*, p. 24.
[7] **Ezek. ix. 1-7.** [8] Literally, "ye punishments of."

of death in his hand!" Forthwith, six men appeared to come through the gate of the upper, or priests' court, which faced the north, every one with a sword in his hand, a seventh[1] following, clothed in white linen, like a priest[2] or an angel,[3] with a scribe's inkhorn at his side; the whole passing into the priests' court, and standing beside the brazen altar. The glory of the God of Israel seemed then to rise from off the cherubim on which it had rested, and hang over the threshold of the temple, which it once more, for a moment, revisited. From its midst the Divine Voice now cried to the man clothed in white linen, with the inkhorn at his side: "Go through the midst of the city—the midst of Jerusalem—and sign a cross[4] on the foreheads of the people who are moaning and sobbing for sorrow, on account of all the abominations done in its midst!" Turning next to the six others, the Voice commanded them to follow their companion through the city, and slay! "Let not your eye spare," it said, "nor have any pity; old and young, maidens and little children and women—slay them all, to the last! but come near no one on whom is the cross, and begin from My sanctuary!" The elders before the temple, so lately busy with idol worship, were the first to fall;[5] the Voice calling aloud to the six slayers to "Defile the temple and fill its courts with the slain." This done, swift as lightning—another command followed: "Go ye forth, now, into the city." And they went forth to slay the city population.

[1] Six to destroy; one, to save!

[2] Lev. vi. 10; xvi. 4.

[3] Dan. x. 5; xii. 6, 7. The Jewish belief in seven archangels seems to have sprung from this verse.

[4] Gesenius. Ewald. The word is Tav, and means a sign or mark, especially in the form of a cross. In Arabic "Tiv," means a cross burned in on the necks or thighs of horses and camels. Hence the letter Tau has the form of a cross in the Phœnician alphabet, and on the coins of the Maccabees.

[5] Ezek. viii. 16.

Moved by such fierce destruction, which carried with it the utter ruin of Israel, the prophet seemed, in the vision, to fall on his face,[1] and cry out, "Ah, Lord Jehovah! Wilt Thou destroy all the remnant of Israel, in this outpouring of Thy fury on Jerusalem!" But the hour of mercy was passed. "The iniquity of the House of Israel and Judah," replied the Voice, "is very, very great; the land is full of blood and the city with the perversion of right, for they say, 'Jehovah has forsaken the land,' and 'Jehovah does not see.' Therefore My eye shall not spare, nor will I have pity; I will let the punishment of their way rest on their heads!" But now the man clothed in white reappeared, to announce that the Divine command, to slay the multitude of the citizens, sparing only the godly, had been carried out.

A new phase of the vision then opened. Jehovah once more[2] sat on His sapphire throne, above the firmament borne by the four cherubim, and commanded the man or angel, in white, to go between the wheels, under the cherubim, and fill his hand with burning coals from the midst of these awful forms, and scatter them over the city![3] As he hastened to obey, the cherubim stood on the right or south side of the temple, and the cloud of the Divine glory filled the inner court. But now, again, the glory rose from over them, and rested above the threshold of the sanctuary, filling it with a blinding splendour which shone over all the court; the wings of the cherubim sounding amidst the brightness, "like the voice of El Shaddai when He thunders." Putting forth his hand, one of the cherubim took fire from between the wheels, and gave it to the man

[1] Ezek. ix. 8-11. [2] Ezek. x. 1-22.
[3] It was to perish like Sodom. "Coals" = brands.

clothed in white, who took it and went out. The glory of Jehovah then rose from over the temple threshold, and rested again above the cherubim, who forthwith spread their wings and mounted up from the earth ; the mysterious wheels, quickened to hurricane speed[1] by a command from the Voice, accompanying their every motion. God was about finally to forsake His fallen city, now filled with slain, but He paused for a moment at the east gate of the temple, whither the Spirit also transported the prophet.

At this spot, the east gate of the outer court, twenty-five men seemed to be assembled, two of whom, at least, the prophet recognized—Jaazaniah, the son of Azur, and Pelatiah, the son of Benaiah, both members of the aristocratic party, and heads of the people, as indeed were all the others.[2] "Son of man," said the Divine Voice, as they appeared, "these are the men who guide the city ; planning wickedness and giving evil counsel. Mocking the words of Jeremiah, they say, 'The time is not near to build houses for the returning exiles. So far from that, the prophet has told us that the city is the pot and we the flesh, to be stewed in flames of war!'[3] Therefore prophesy, prophesy against them, son of man!"[4]

On this the Spirit of Jehovah appeared in the vision, to descend again, on the seer, and to command him to say—

[1] Ezek. x. 13. The words "O wheel," are in Hebrew only one—Galgal—which means a whirlwind as well as a wheel, the idea of rolling being common to both.

[2] **Ezek. xi. 1-4.**

[3] Jerome, *in loc.*, renders this passage : "'Although lately,' say they, 'after the first captivity, houses which had been destroyed were rebuilt, yet it is not the time now to build. For this city is the pot, and we are the flesh to be cooked in it.'" Smend has virtually adopted Jerome's explanation, and so has Rosenmüller. Smend says, "It is not the time to build houses (rough times are before us); the town is the pot and we the flesh (and we will be cooked by the fire of war)." Conscious of their false position and the danger ahead, they try to put on a light air and laugh the matter off, living recklessly while they can.

[4] **Havernick. Hitzig. Keil.**

"XI. 5. Thus says Jehovah: [1] Ye have indeed spoken in this way, O House of Israel, and I know (well, besides) what rises in your mind, (however ye may seek to hide it from Me)! 6. The number of victims you have slain in this city (by violence and perverted justice) is very great; ye have filled her streets with them! 7. Therefore, thus says the Lord Jehovah: your victims, whom ye have heaped up in the midst of her, are the flesh, and she is the pot! (They alone lie safe in your midst!) But I will lead forth you, yourselves, their murderers, (into captivity). 8. Ye have feared the sword, and the sword will I bring on you, says the Lord Jehovah. 9. I will lead you out of the city (as captives), and give you into the hand of aliens, and execute judgment on you. 10. Ye shall fall by the sword. I will judge you (at a place) on the borders of Israel,[2] that ye may know that I am Jehovah! 11. Jerusalem shall not be *your* pot, nor shall *ye* be the flesh in it. I will judge *you* on the borders of Israel, 12. and ye shall know that I am Jehovah, in whose commands ye did not walk, and whose laws ye did not obey; for ye acted according to the practices[3] of the heathen round about you!"

At this moment, while Ezekiel was apparently delivering this terrible doom, an awful incident occurred in the vision. His words had fallen with fatal effect on the ears of Pelatiah, one of the men now addressed. The terrors before him, as one of the guiltiest amongst those accused, had brought on a sudden fit, in which he forthwith died. At the sight, the prophet was overpowered. It seemed as if all Israel were to perish, and, falling on his face, he once more cried with a loud voice, "Ah, Lord Jehovah! Wilt Thou make an utter end of the remnant of Israel?" But the Divine Voice replied with words of comfort. The people of Jerusalem had turned against their brethren of the Captivity, and had boasted that the Holy City was for ever the inheritance of those that were left. The exiles, how-

[1] Ezek. xi. 5-12.
[2] At Riblah. How literally fulfilled! 2 Kings xxv. 6. Jer. lii. 9, 10.
[3] Literally, "laws."

ever, would supply a remnant to Israel, and would one day come back and possess the land of their fathers.

"XI. 15. Son of man![1] Thy brethren, even thy brethren, the men of thy captivity,[2] and the whole House of Israel together, are they to whom the inhabitants of Jerusalem said—'Get you gone, far from Jehovah! The land is given to us for an inheritance!' 16. Therefore say, Thus says the Lord Jehovah: Because I have cast them far off among the heathen, and scattered them through the lands, and have been but little of a sanctuary, (or defence) to them, in the countries whither they have come; 17. therefore say, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, I will gather you from among the heathen, and bring you back from the lands where ye have been scattered, and I will give *you* the land of Israel! 18. And (the exiles, when) they thus (return and) come hither, will put away (from the soil of Israel) all its detestable idols, and all its (heathen) abominations. 19. And I will give them one heart, and will put a new spirit within them; and I will take away the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh; 20. that they may walk in My statutes and keep My laws and do them, and they shall be My people, and I will be their God. 21. But as to those (here, in Judah and Jerusalem,) whose heart walks after their detestable idols and their (heathen) abominations, I will bring down the punishment of their way on their own heads, saith the Lord Jehovah!"

The vision now ended. The cherubim spread their wings,[3] and the wheels moved at their side, the glory of the God of Israel resting over them, as the prophet followed the awful sight till it passed over the Mount of Olives, towards the east, and was hidden from him. But at that moment he awoke, and found himself in his own chamber—the ecstasy gone—and his mind so composed that he could repeat to the elders, who were still around

[1] **Ezek. xi. 15-21.**

[2] As the word stands in the Hebrew text. Literally, "those who have the right of redemption for thee." But Ewald and Smend amend the word slightly, and make it "of thy "exile," or "captivity." This I have adopted, as it gives a much better sense.

[3] **Ezek. xi. 22-25.**

him, the amazing sights and words he had seen and heard. It had all been, in effect, a dream, and we know that in dreams a few moments suffice to bring before the mind the details and communications of apparently lengthened events.

It might have been hoped that the blending of terror and gentle pity, which had marked this striking message, would have moved the exiles to better thoughts towards the God of their fathers. But, in the prophet's words, "though they had eyes, they saw not; and though they had ears, they would not hear." It was impossible, however, for an earnest soul like that of Ezekiel to be silent, even if his efforts to benefit his brethren were vain. The true state of things in Jerusalem, and the best interests of his fellow-captives, demanded his speaking often and earnestly. The fact that, as yet, all was outwardly calm, and that no thought of a campaign against Jerusalem had been mooted in Babylon, made it hard to induce belief in the ruin predicted as so near.

Very different accounts of the state of feeling in the mother city were evidently abroad. On the one hand, as we see from Jeremiah, the agitation against the Chaldæan vassalage was increasing, and threatened to lead to the most perilous results; the majority of influential public men in Jerusalem supporting it, and urging King Zedekiah to form a league with Egypt, which would, itself, be a declaration of war against Babylon. They were, unhappily, able, indeed, ere long, to force him into it.[1] A league with Pharaoh secured, the city, they fancied, would enjoy a long future of victory and peace.

There were others, however, who had no such illusory

[1] Ezek. xvii. 7; xix. 1.

anticipations, though they failed, in the heightening confusion, to realize the true solution and hope. They were, hence, overwhelmed with despondency; even the truths of their ancient faith, and the words of the prophets, giving birth, in their despairing hearts, only to mocking jests which spread far and wide.[1]

The exiles around Ezekiel echoed these opposite feelings. Many shewed plainly the incredulity with which they received his words,[2] but vain hope and distracting excitement were the prevalent mood. False prophets among them sought still, at least in secret, to promote the views of the anti-Chaldæan party in Jerusalem, and even the elders who came to Ezekiel, let it be seen only too plainly, that, while willing to hear his counsels and consolations, they would fain win from him some utterance favourable to their cherished hope of a speedy return to Palestine. They still, moreover, as the prophet discovered,[3] hankered after idolatry, and thus precluded his repeating even the comfort he had hitherto given them.[4]

Under such circumstances, Ezekiel threw himself into the duties of his office with intense zeal, for a few years only remained in which even to mitigate the calamities he so clearly foresaw. His next attempt, therefore, was to combat, once more, the idle hope of the deliverance of Jerusalem from vassalage to the Chaldæans. For this end words were not enough. Above all other prophets he taught by vivid "signs," or acted presentations of the truths he sought to enforce; Jehovah, in this, as in other cases, adapting the mode of His revelations to the mental characteristics of His servants.

[1] Ezek. xii. 22; xviii. 2.
[2] Ezek. xii. 27.
[3] Ezek. xiv. 3; xx. 30.
[4] Ezek. xi. 17–20.

That Jerusalem would very soon be besieged so fiercely that its princes would seek escape by a hasty flight, was, hence, set before the minds of the exiles afresh, in dramatic action, peculiar to the prophetic order. In obedience to a Divine impulse, Ezekiel packed up [1] a bundle of personal necessaries, such as one would carry with him on a hasty journey, and prepared, by day, to set off ;[2] laying the bundle before his door, that it might be seen by all. He himself, however, was to set out by night, like a captive, digging a hole through the soft sun-dried bricks of his house, which he could easily do, and going out, before all the people, by the gap. His bundle, which had previously been carried back, inside the house, was then, in the darkness, taken out through the opening; the prophet lifting it on his shoulder, and acting as if he were setting off with it; his face covered with his mantle, so that he could not see the ground over which he was passing. The whole was to be a "sign" of what awaited King Zedekiah, and vividly foreshadowed his last disastrous attempt to escape.[3]

A Poor Bedouin on a Journey.

In anticipation of the notice such an act on the part of a recognized prophet would attract, words were put into

[1] **Ezek. xii. 1-8.** [2] The actual setting out was to be by night.
[3] Jer. xxxix. 4; lii. 7. 2 Kings xxv. 4.

the mouth of Ezekiel, to reply to any question.[1] Ezekiel was to tell the "House of Disobedience," for thus Jehovah would call His people till they repented—

"XII. 10. Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: This burden-bearing refers to the Prince (Zedekiah) in Jerusalem, and to all the House of Israel in that city. 11. Say (to your brethren, the exiles, O Ezekiel), I am your 'Sign.' As I have done (this last night), so will it be done to the people of Jerusalem. They will go into exile and into captivity. 12. And the prince that is among them[2] will bear a burden on his shoulder, in the darkness, and shall go forth; they will (as it were) dig through the wall to get out—(for the Chaldæans will watch at the gates)—and the prince will cover his face (to conceal it), so that he will not see the ground as he goes. 13. But I will spread My net over him, and he will be taken in My snare, caught like a wild creature by the hunter, and I will bring him to Babylon, the land of the Chaldæans; yet he will not see it,[3] though he will die there! 14. And I will scatter to all the winds his guard that is round him, and all his forces, and unsheathe the sword behind them. 15. And they shall know that I am Jehovah, when I scatter them among the heathen, and disperse them among the lands! 16. But I will leave a few of their number (to escape) from the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, that they may make known all their abominable deeds among the nations whither they come. And they shall know that I am Jehovah."

Another acted sermon followed soon after.[4] The prophet was directed to shew the terror and despair that would come on Judah when it was invaded, by eating his bread and drinking his water before his neighbours, trembling, and shaking, and overborne with sorrow, and to tell them that the meaning of his doing so was, that Jehovah had said, respecting the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the land of Israel, that they would eat their bread in sorrow, and drink their water in despairing terror, because the

[1] **Ezek. xii. 9-16.**

[2] Jehoiachin was the legitimate king. Ezekiel, therefore, speaks of Zedekiah not as the Melek, but as the Nasr—"the exalted one."

[3] His eyes were put out at Riblah.

[4] **Ezek. xii. 17-20.**

land would be laid desolate, emptied of its fulness of life and activity, through the wickedness of its people as a whole. The inhabited towns would be laid waste and the land made a desert, and they would know that He was Jehovah!

Things were hurrying on to the inevitable!

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